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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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WB evacuates 1.14L people as cyclone Dana approaches

KOLKATA, 23 OCT

More than 1.14 lakh people in West Bengal have been evacuated to safer shelters so far, with severe cyclone Dana approaching the adjacent Odisha coast, officials said on Wednesday. The cyclone, with wind speeds expected to reach up to 120 kmph, is likely to hit between Bhitarkanika National Park and Dhamra Port in Odisha by Friday morning, the India Meteorological Department said. In anticipation of the storm, flight operations at Kolkata airport will be suspended for 15 hours from 6 pm on Thursday to 9 am on Friday, while Eastern Railway has cancelled 190 local trains in its Sealdah division from 8 pm on Thursday to 10 am on Friday. *—PTI*

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India, China tiff thaws with a handshake

Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping meet after 5 years to endorse patrolling agreement

KAZAN, 23 OCT

In their first structured bilateral talks in nearly five years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday agreed that India and China can have a "peaceful and stable" relationship by displaying maturity and mutual respect, and endorsed the pact on the resolution of the dragging eastern Ladakh border row.

In the meeting, Modi underscored the importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquility. In a post on 'X', Modi said, "India-China relations are important for the people of our countries, and for regional and global peace and stability."

> **We support dialogue and diplomacy, not war.**
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said at a media briefing that the two leaders noted that the special representatives on the India-China boundary question have a critical role to play in the resolution of the issue and for the maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas.

Modi and Xi instructed the special representatives to meet at an early date and continue their efforts, he said. "We hope to schedule the next meeting of Special Representatives at an appropriate date," he said.

Both Modi and Xi stressed that with maturity and wisdom, and by showing mutual respect, India and China can have a peaceful and stable relationship, Misri said. He said restoration of peace and tranquility in border areas will create space for returning towards the path of normalisation of ties. "It will also contribute to a multi-polar Asia and a multi-polar world," the MEA said.

Modi holds bilateral talks with Uzbek, UAE Prezs

Modi held bilateral meetings with the presidents of Uzbekistan and the UAE on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan. In a post on X, Modi said he had "a wonderful meeting" with Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev during which they "discussed ways to boost bilateral cooperation between India and Uzbekistan, including trade and cultural linkages".In another post on X, Modi said, "Glad to have met my brother, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of UAE, on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan."

However, after wrapping up his two-day "impactful" visit to Russia, Modi left for home. *—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit, in Russia on Wednesday **PHOTO: ANI**

CHANNAPATNA BYPOLL

BJP's Yogeeshwara is now Cong's pick

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

BJP leader and former Minister CP Yogeeshwara on Wednesday quit his party and joined the Congress, which wasted no time in announcing him as Channapatna candidate for 13 November bypoll.

Congress has fielded E Annapurna as its candidate for Sandur seat.

He met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress chief, after resigning from the primary membership of BJP earlier in the day. Shivakumar inducted Yogeeshwara, who quit as an MLC on Monday, into the party at the Congress state headquarters here.

Terming politics as an art of possibilities, he dismissed suggestions that Congress was welcoming the five-time MLA

DK Shivakumar with CP Yogeeshwara **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

to the party as it had no "efficient" nominee in Channapatna, and said: "Congress never has a dearth of candidates."Yogeeshwara said after BJP joined hands with JD(S) he realised that he had no political future there. Responding to criticism that he has no party loyalty, Yogeeshwara said, "as long as I'm there in a party, I'm loyal to it..."

—PTI

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Nikhil is Oppn's frontrunner

JD(S) leader and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy's son Nikhil Kumaraswamy on Wednesday said leaders of BJP and his party will discuss and announce the NDA candidate for 13 November by-polls to Channapatna Assembly. BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka have spoken to Kumaraswamy. *—PTI*

Residents in flooded areas may face forced relocation

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

With the City civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) deciding to seal the Kendriya Vihar apartment complex for the next seven days after it was inundated due to rains, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday said authorities may have to forcibly vacate some residents, who are refusing to cooperate, keeping their own safety and interest in mind.

Shivakumar who visited the 603-unit complex, said a majority of its residents had been shifted, and facilities made available for their lodging.

"Probably in Yelahanka's history there has never been so much rain, it has been 115-120 years, only four times Bengaluru has received such rains. Water is being drained out, this building has about 603 flats in eight blocks. Through the corporation we have taken possession of it, we are unable to supply water and power," he said. Speaking to reporters, he said 95 per cent of residents have cooperated and vacated with the help of the welfare association, but some 5 per cent -- about 20 houses or so according to officials -- are still staying there despite no power supply, probably due to some sentiments.

With heavy rain expected and amid fears of flooding, BBMP on Tuesday ordered the shutdown of the apartment complex. Rescue teams on Tuesday evacuated hundreds of residents from the apartment complex, located near Yelahanka Lake. A number of vehicles, including cars and two-wheelers parked in the complex's basement, were fully submerged. *—PTI*

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Children row a makeshift raft to cross a flooded street in Sai Layout, Bengaluru, on Wednesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

B'luru building collapse: 7 more bodies recovered

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

Seven more bodies were recovered during search and rescue operation after an under-construction building collapsed at Babusapalya here, taking the death toll to eight, police said on Wednesday.

Teams from the fire and emergency department, National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force have been pressed into rescue operations since the incident occurred during heavy downpour on Tuesday, they said.

"Bhuvan Reddy, son of Muniraja Reddy under whose name the building is being constructed and the contractor Muniyappa who was building it have been taken into custody," a senior police official said.

"Permission was only for construction of a four-storey building but seven floors were being constructed," he said. One body was recovered by the rescue team on Tuesday. *—PTI*

Centre slams X for facilitating flight bomb threats

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

The Union Ministry of Electronics and IT has sharply criticised social media platform X for facilitating the spread of bomb hoaxes targeting airlines in recent days. Over 120 flights operated by Indian carriers, including Air India, IndiGo, and Vistara, have received bomb threats, with 30 flights affected just yesterday. During a virtual meeting chaired by Joint Secretary Sanket S Bhondve, X was accused of "abetting crime" by allowing the circulation of these hoaxes. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu assured that the government is addressing the issue while ensuring passenger safety.

—Salar News with agencies

India, Pak extend Kartarpur Corridor contract for 5 yrs

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

India and Pakistan have agreed to extend the validity of the Agreement on Sri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor for a period of five years.

The agreement signed between two countries on 24 October 2019 to facilitate the visit of pilgrims from India to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan's Narowal through the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, was valid for a period of five years.

In a press release, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, "It has been agreed between India and Pakistan through diplomatic channels to extend the validity of the Agreement on Sri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor for a further period of five years."

Extension of the validity of this agreement will ensure uninterrupted operation of the Corridor for use by the pilgrims from India to visit Gurdwara in Pakistan. In a press release, MEA said, "In view of the continued requests of pilgrims regarding the removal of USD 20 service charge levied by Pakistan per pilgrim per visit, India has once again urged Pakistan to not levy any fee or charges on the pilgrims."

Earlier in June, Pakistan has issued 509 visas to Sikh pilgrims from India to attend Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's death anniversary. *—ANI*

MVA allies to contest 85 seats each

MUMBAI, 23 OCT

After days of stalemate, Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) of Congress, NCP (SP), and Shiv Sena (UBT) on Wednesday announced contesting 85 seats each in Maharashtra Assembly elections even as deliberations to seal a final pact are still underway.

The three allies are discussing the sharing of the remaining 33 seats out of the total 288 among themselves and smaller parties.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said consensus has been reached on 270 out of a total of 288 seats for the 20 November elections.

"We will include Samajwadi Party, PWP, CPI(M), CPI, and AAP. Discussions are still on for the remaining seats. We have amicably arrived at a consensus on 270 seats. MVA stands united to defeat the Mahayuti government," Raut said. Speaking separately to reporters, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Desai explained the division of seats so far.

"The three MVA constituents have arrived at a consensus on 85 seats each (totalling 255). Among the remaining 33 constituencies, the allies are discussing 18 seats among themselves, while the rest segments (15) will be allocated to smaller parties," Desai added. *—PTI*

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ISRAEL SAYS IT KILLED 'NEW' HEZBOLLAH LEADER

BEIRUT, 23 OCT

Israel said Tuesday that one of its airstrikes outside Beirut earlier in the month killed a Hezbollah official widely expected to have replaced the militant group's longtime leader, who was killed by an Israeli airstrike in September.

There was no immediate confirmation from Hezbollah about the fate of Hashem Safieddine, a powerful cleric who was expected to succeed Hassan Nasrallah, one of the group's founders.

Safieddine was killed in early October in a strike that also killed 25 other Hezbollah leaders, according to Israel, whose airstrikes in southern Lebanon in recent months have killed many of Hezbollah's top leaders, leaving the group in disarray.

Last week, Israel killed the top leader of Hamas, Yahya Sinwar, during a battle in Gaza. Blinken also stressed the need for Israel to do more to help increase the flow of humanitarian aid to Palestinians. *—PTI*

Hashem Safieddine **PHOTO: X**

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MAJORITY VERDICT

States can regulate industrial alcohol: SC

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held the states have regulatory power over production, manufacture and supply of industrial alcohol.

In a 8:1 majority ruling, the top court held that the phrase "intoxicating liquor" in Entry 8 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution would include industrial alcohol within its ambit. The majority bench comprised Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, Abhay S Oka, JB Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih, Justice BV Nagarathna, however, dissented and held states did not have the legislative competence to regulate industrial alcohol or denatured spirit. The apex court's majority verdict overturned its 1990 seven-judge bench judgment in Synthetics & Chemicals Ltd vs State of Uttar Pradesh holding that Centre had the regulatory power over the production of industrial alcohol.

Ethyl alcohol (which has 95 per cent ethanol) is an industrial form of alcohol and unfit for human consumption. The CJI, who authored the majority verdict, also writing on behalf of the seven judges, said Entry 8 sought to regulate everything from "raw materials to production of intoxicating liquor". Parliament does not have the legislative competence to enact a law taking control of the industry of intoxicating liquor, it added. The majority judgment said the phrase "intoxicating liquor" in Entry 8 included all alcoholic liquids which could harm public health. State including Uttar Pradesh had challenged the seven-judge bench judgement and challenged that Centre's position that it had exclusive control over industrial alcohol. *—PTI*

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Toothless environment laws: SC slams Centre on air pollution

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Centre for making the environment protection law "toothless", and said the provision under the CAQM Act which deals with penalty for stubble burning was not being implemented. *—PTI*

PRIYANKA'S POLL DEBUT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with candidate for upcoming Wayanad poll Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a rally, in Kerala on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

> **When I was 17 years old, I campaigned for the first time for my father. It's now 35 years, I have campaigned for my mother, my brother and many of my colleagues in different elections**
>
> —Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress Wayanad poll candidate

Body of man found with slit throat in City

BENGALURU 23 OCT

An unidentified body of a man with his throat slit was found near a local bar in Basaveshwaranagar police station limits on Wednesday morning. According to the police, the incident took place in the wee hours of Wednesday when a group of assailants allegedly attacked the man, who is said to be between 35-40 years of age. The identity of the deceased could not be ascertained as yet, the police added later in the day. Preliminary investigation revealed that on Tuesday night, the person was noticed begging for money and alcohol from the passers-by near Modi Junction in Basaveshwaranagar. However early in the morning, a few locals found his body and alerted the jurisdictional police. Rushing to the spot, the police inspected the scene following, which the body was sent to Victoria Hospital. "We have alerted the police stations across the City to determine the identity of the deceased," an official said. "We have analysed the footage from a nearby CCTV camera and have recorded statements from the people. So far, we have information that the person was attacked by a group of men wielding a knife.," the official added. —*Salar News*

Avaana raises $135M to fuel climate startups

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

Avaana Capital, India's climate-focused venture capital firm, has managed to infuse Avaana Climate and Sustainability Fund with USD 135 million, thanks to support from renowned institutional investors, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), said a senior official from the company on Wednesday. In a press statement, Anjali Bansal, partner at Avaana Capital, said the fund focuses on three core sectors that account for 90 per cent of India's carbon emissions: Energy and Resource Management, Mobility and Supply Chains, and Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. Bansal said India is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations and with the largest population and the sixth-largest economy, the country plays a crucial role in global climate solutions. —*PTI*

BMTC bags 2 prizes at EV Charge India Excellence Awards

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has been awarded with two prestigious awards at the EV Charge India Excellence Awards 2024, held in Bengaluru on Wednesday. The event celebrated exceptional achievements in the electric vehicle (EV) and charging infrastructure sectors. BMTC received the "Green Fleet Excellence Award" for its commitment to promoting sustainable public transportation solutions and the "EV Bus Champion Award" for its efforts to support Bengaluru's vision of reducing dependence on fossil fuels. —*Salar News*

Illegal constructions to face action

DKS says govt will introduce a new law to stop illegal constructions

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday night took stock of the incident spot where an under-construction building collapsed in Bengaluru's Babusapalya.

Shivakumar also claimed that illegal activities were going on and he would take strict action against the owner and everyone.

He said, "I was told that there was no permission given. Illegal activities were going on. We will take strict action against the owner, contractor and everyone. In the entire Bengaluru, I will see that...We will come out with a decision. All the illegal construction will be stopped immediately...Contractor, my officials and even the owner of the property everyone will be booked under the law."

He also mentioned that a 26-year-old man lost his life in the incident.

"As per the information I got, 21 labourers were here. A 26-year-old Arman's body was recovered. In a day 26 people work here," he said.

"It is a big crime to construct a building illegally in this way on 60/40 land. Apparently, the owner of the building is constructing the building without plan approval, and strict action will be taken against the culprits." Teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), along with dog squads have been deployed at the site as the search continues for the people trapped under the debris.

Rs 5L for family of children who drowned in lake

Shivakumar announced on Wednesday a compensation of Rs 5 lakh for the family of two children who tragically drowned in Kengeri Lake.

BBMP will provide Rs 5 lakh to the family of the deceased siblings—Mahalakshmi, 11, and her brother Srinivas, 13—who lived in Harsha Layout, Kengeri. The duo fell into the lake near Kengeri Satellite Town while attempting to fetch water on Monday.

After a search lasting five hours, a team of six personnel using a motorboat located Srinivas's body, followed by the recovery of Mahalakshmi's body. He said that Rs 10,000 compensation has been announced for owners of homes which are flooded.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

NDRF personnel during a rescue operation after an under-construction building collapsed, in Bengaluru, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

An uprooted tree damages several vehicles parked near Nettakallappa Circle, at Basavanagudi, in City on Wednesday; (Below) Kendriya Vihar apartment in Yelahanka is flooded for the second day in a row ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Building owner arrested, 3 more booked

Bengaluru, 23 Oct

An FIR was registered at the Hennur Police Station against three named accused: Munirajareddy, Mohan Reddy, and Elumalai, following the collapse of an under-construction building in Bengaluru. They face charges under various sections of the BNS and the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act. One of the accused, Bhuvan Reddy, who is the son of Munirajareddy, under whose name the building was being constructed, has also been arrested. The contractor, Muniyappa, who was responsible for constructing the four floors, has also been taken into custody, according to DCP East D Devaraja. So far, five bodies have been recovered, identified as Harman, 26; Tripal, 35; Mohd Sahil, 19; Sathya Raju, 25; and Shankar. The injured individuals are Jagadevi, 45; Rasheed, 28; Nagaraju, 25; Ramesh Kumar, 28; Harman, 22; and Ayaj.

—*ANI*

STATE ACCOUNTABLE FOR DEATHS: BJP

NEW DELHI/MYSURU, 23 OCT

BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari on Wednesday criticised the Congress-led State government following the tragic collapse of an under-construction building in Bengaluru, which resulted in the loss of lives.

Bhandari said, "It is unfortunate that the corrupt Karnataka government did not know that unauthorised building construction was taking place in Bengaluru. The Congress government, which is neck deep in corruption, has caused a bad name to Silicon Valley.

It is unfortunate that the only focus of the Karnataka government, including Siddaramaiah, DK Shivakumar is to loot the land of the poor, rather than to take care of the common man."

"Bengaluru has never seen such apathetic misgovernance as it is experiencing now. This has led to the loss of common lives, of innocent lives. This is not merely an accident. This is akin to murder, and the state is accountable for it.

The Karnataka Congress government needs to answer for that," he added.

Former minister and BJP MLC AH Vishwanath condemned the state government for its inadequate response to the heavy rains and flooding in Bengaluru and across Karnataka. —Salar News

TECHIES TRAPPED IN OFFICES AMID RAINS

Tech workers in Bengaluru found themselves stranded in their offices on Tuesday as heavy rain and waterlogging led to severe traffic congestion on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) following which the traffic police closed the gates to tech corridors.

Social media posts reflected the frustration of those affected. One user on X shared, "Kadubeesanahalli, ORR traffic is completely standstill. Many of my colleagues returned to their desks after waiting for an hour without being able to exit the tech parks." Another user lamented the situation, stating, "Insane traffic at ORR; pray no one should experience this madness. This is getting beyond repair." In light of the congestion, an advisory was issued to companies, particularly those near Eco Space, requesting their cooperation as traffic police planned to allow vehicles through in phases to alleviate the bottleneck.

—*Salar News*

COMMUTERS TAKE 3HRS TO CROSS 5KM

Commuters on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) faced an excruciating near standstill on Tuesday, with some travellers taking three hours to cover just 5km due to relentless rains and waterlogging at multiple points. Despite the deployment of numerous traffic police, the chaos extended to both major and minor roads across the City.

Employees in East Bengaluru, particularly in neighborhoods such as Whitefield, Marathahalli, and Bellandur, reported unusually long traffic jams on the Ring Road. In addition, service roads in areas such as HRBR Layout, Ramamurthy Nagar, Hebbal, and Bellandur were partially submerged, raising concerns about the lack of visible efforts to de-silt or repair drainage systems. Authorities reported waterlogging along the entire 60km stretch of the ORR. On Wednesday, commuters faced heavy traffic on Silk Board Flyover. Vehicles barely moved 10m for over 2 hours. —*Salar News*

Yogeeshwara's return powers Cong

MYSURU, 23 OCT

Former minister CP Yogeeshwara rejoined Congress on Wednesday, marking his departure from BJP. His return is seen as a strategic move to strengthen Congress's prospects in the upcoming Channapatna bypolls scheduled for next month.

Yogeeshwara's, a prominent Vokkaliga leader, will contest the bypoll on a Congress ticket against a candidate from the JD(S), filling the vacancy left by HD Kumaraswamy, the Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries, who previously held the seat. Yogeeshwara is set to file his nomination on Thursday.

His exit from BJP was precipitated by the party's decision to partner with the JD(S) for the Channapatna bypolls, which left him feeling marginalised.

Yogeeshwara's rejoining of the Congress is expected to invigorate party workers in the Old Mysuru region. In the recent parliamentary elections across several constituencies, including Mysuru, Mandya, and Bengaluru Rural, Congress faced significant losses to NDA candidates.

Channapatna constituency, where Yogeshwara has a long political history, is predominantly Vokkaliga, with around 90,000 to 1,00,000 voters among a total of 2,40,000. Yogeshwara has represented this Assembly segment five times, although he faced defeat against JD(S) candidate Kumaraswamy thrice. He has also held various ministerial roles and is known for his contributions to lift irrigation projects and lake restoration. His political journey includes stints with the Samajwadi Party and as an independent candidate.

Yogeeshwara's return is a boost for DK Shivakumar and his brother DK Suresh in the Ramanagara and Bengaluru Rural. His "Ghar Wapsi" to Congress is likely to impact electoral dynamics across at least ten districts in Old Mysuru. Yogeeshwara was instrumental in the previous Congress-JD(S) government's downfall, aiding in the formation of BJP government led by BS Yediyurappa. —*Salar News*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and CP Yogeeshwara in Bengaluru, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

"Today's developments were not unexpected, it was expected. Yogeeshwara has special contacts in all the parties, so he had made a political decision

-BY Vijayendra, State BJP President

Traffic cops come to the rescue amid floods

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

As the City faces its heaviest rainfall in nearly 30 years, the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) have stepped up to address severe traffic congestion, particularly on the Outer Ring Roads (ORRs).

To ensure smooth vehicular flow, BTP personnel are mobilising resources to fill potholes and repair damaged roads within their jurisdictions. On Wednesday, a team cleared stagnant water in the Horamavu underpass, while another removed fallen trees blocking roads at Indiranagar junction, Mekhri Circle, South-end Circle, and Nanjappa junction.

"While we've managed to fill some potholes with mud and stones, a more permanent fix with concrete is necessary," said an official from the KR Puram Traffic police station, speaking to Salar News.

Many users on X tagged civic agencies, sharing visuals of potholes, heavy traffic, and waterlogged roads, prompting the BTP to act swiftly to restore traffic flow. "This situation can lead to congestion and accidents, so we decided to intervene promptly," noted a traffic officer working at Doddanekundi Junction.

Officers also took to social media to warn commuters of traffic jams due to waterlogging and uprooted trees in areas including Airport Road, Mahadevapura, Yelahanka, Sadashivanagar, JP Nagar, Madiwala, and Electronic City. Slow-moving traffic was reported in HSR Layout, Whitefield, Sarakki Main Road, and Bommanahalli.

—*Salar News*

ED raids are meant to target CM: Cong leader

MYSURU, 23 OCT

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson M Lakshmana criticised the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid on the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) office, claiming it was aimed solely at intimidating Chief Minister Siddaramaiah rather than uncovering the truth behind allegations of ₹5,000 crore in irregularities.

At a press conference held at the Congress office, Lakshmana alleged that during the two-day raid, ED officials confiscated numerous files related to the allotment of 14 sites to Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, which he claimed was a targeted attack on the Chief Minister.

"Typically, the ED investigates money laundering cases under the direction of appropriate agencies. However, in this instance, they overstepped their mandate by raiding MUDA with the specific intention of targeting the Chief Minister," Lakshmana stated.

He noted that the raid occurred while a single-member inquiry commission appointed by the government was already investigating the matter, and the Lokayukta was also conducting its own investigation under court orders. Lakshmana expressed his party's intent to challenge the ED's investigation in a court of law.

Additionally, he accused ED officials of coercing MUDA staff into signing documents after extracting information from them. —*Salar News*

HEARING ON 5 NOV

State defends Kambala in HC, counters PETA's petition

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

State government on Wednesday asserted before the High Court that 'Kambala', a traditional slush track buffalo race, represents the cultural heritage of the entire state, not just a particular region.

This statement was made in response to a public interest litigation filed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India.

PETA's petition argued that Kambala is primarily a tradition of Udupi and Dakshina Kannada and that organising the event here is motivated by commercial interests rather than cultural preservation.

PHOTO: PTI

Advocate General (AG) Shashi Kiran Shetty, representing the State, rejected PETA's claim that Kambala is restricted to specific regions. He emphasised that Kambala is part of Karnataka's cultural fabric and could potentially be held across the country.

The AG further compared the event to horse races, where horses are transported from different locations for competitions across states. He stressed that the issue at hand was whether the event constituted cruelty to animals, not its geographical location. The division bench scheduled the next hearing for 5 November. PETA's petition sought a stay on any Kambala event in Bengaluru and called for the enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, as well as the provisions of the state's 2017 amendments to the Act. It also requested that the court restrict Kambala to its traditional rural locations in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada. —*PTI*

AFTER HYDERABAD, MUMBAI

Uber looks to pilot its buses in B'luru

BENGALURU, 23 OCT

After Kolkata and Delhi, the ride-hailing platform Uber is set to pilot its bus (shuttle) service in Hyderabad and Mumbai and is now in active dialogue with multiple stakeholders here to get a green light to launch it in the country's IT capital.

President, Uber India and South Asia, Prabhjeet Singh, told reporters here: "We already have two cities live with Uber bus and two more cities (Hyderabad and Mumbai) are going live and unfortunately, Bengaluru is not yet one of them.

Uber, Singh said, is in active dialogue with different stakeholders to start bus service in Bengaluru.

"We need regulatory go ahead to be able to launch a service like this and we have not been able to receive that. We are in active dialogues with multiple stakeholders and we are hoping to able to get a green light to do that but right now we don't have visibility of it," he said."There are many companies which are keen for Uber shuttle to be launched. You could run a shuttle from Hebbal and ORR (Outer Ring Road). Shuttles which are air conditioned, pre-booked, you will get a seat running every two-three minutes," he added. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

'Will name J'khand dist after Ram or Krishna if BJP wins'

MEDININAGAR, 23 OCT

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said that Hussainabad sub-division will be made a district if BJP comes to power in Jharkhand and it will be named after Lord Ram or Krishna. Sarma, also the BJP's Jharkhand election co-in-charge, said that driving out infiltrators from the state would be the priority of the party. He was addressing an election rally at Japla ground in Palamu district seeking votes for Hussainabad assembly constituency candidate Kamlesh Singh."Hussainabad will be made a district for sure after BJP comes to power in the state. It will be named after Lord Ram or Krishna," he said. He alleged that Jharkhand's demography is changing due to Bangladeshi infiltrators but the ruling JMM is silent over the issue since they are its vote bank. *—PTI*

ED raids ex-TN minister in laundering case

CHENNAI, 23 OCT

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday raided premises linked to former AIADMK minister and serving MLA R Vaithiyalingam and some others as part of a money laundering case investigation, official sources said. The raids are being undertaken in four cities of Tamil Nadu, including in the Ekkattuthangal area of Chennai and the minister's house in Orathanadu taluk of Thanjavur district, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED investigation is related to alleged quid pro quo in giving sanctions for Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) works during Vaithiyalingam's stint as the Tamil Nadu housing development minister between 2011-16. *—PTI*

Cong MP booked over remarks against PM

SAHARANPUR, 23 OCT

Charges were framed in a special court here against Congress' Saharanpur MP Imran Masood for allegedly making objectionable comments against Narendra Modi in 2014 when he was chief minister of Gujarat, a lawyer said. Government advocate Gulab Singh said on Wednesday that charges were framed on Tuesday before judge Mohit Sharma of the special MP-MLA court that hears cases involving legislators. He said a case was filed against Masood on March 27, 2014 by Kusum Veer Singh, who was then the Kotwali in-charge of Deoband. It was alleged that Masood had made a controversial statement against Modi during an election meeting in Labkari village of Deoband police station area, threatening to 'tear him into pieces'. It is alleged that he had made objectionable comments against two Bahujan Samaj Party leaders. He said Modi, who was the chief minister of Gujarat at that time, was BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate then. *—PTI*

6 militants held, arms recovered in Manipur

IMPHAL, 23 OCT

Manipur Police arrested six militants of banned outfit Kangleipak Communist Party (People's War Group) in Imphal East district, an official statement said on Wednesday. Authorities recovered a four-wheeler, two two-wheelers, six mobile phones and Rs 3,88,950 from their possession. In a separate operation, security forces conducting search operations in Churachandpur district discovered two local-made guns, two electric detonators, a 9 mm pistol with magazine and three hand grenades. In another operation in near Bongbal village a .303 rifle, a single-barrel shotgun and ammunition were recovered. *—PTI*

Shiv Sena & NCP release 1st lists

Shinde to contest from Kopri-Panchpakhadi

MUMBAI, 23 OCT

Shiv Sena has released its first list of 45 candidates for Maharashtra assembly polls, nominating Chief Minister Eknath Shinde from Kopri-Panchpakhadi in Thane city and more than half a dozen cabinet members from their respective seats. Shiv Sena's ally BJP released a list of 99 candidates on Sunday. It has fielded ministers Gulabrao Patil, Deepak Kesarkar, Abdul Sattar and Shambhuraj Desai from Jalgaon Rural, Sawantwadi, Sillod and Patan, respectively. Cabinet member Dada Bhuse will contest from Malegaon Outer assembly constituency in Nashik, ministers Uday Samant and Tanaji Sawant from Ratnagiri and Paranda. Another prominent leader Sada Sarvankar will fight from Mahim in Mumbai.

The party has also fielded kin of several leaders. From Rajapur, it has given ticket to Kiran Samant, brother of minister Uday Samant. Manisha Waikar, wife of Shiv Sena Lok Sabha member from Mumbai North-West Ravindra Waikar, has been fielded from Jogeshwari (East). Vilas Bhumre, son of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad) Lok Sabha member Sandipan Bhumre, will contest from Paithan.

Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde with others during a visit to the Kamakhya Temple, in Guwahati, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, Nationalist Congress Party also released its first list of 38 candidates with Deputy Chief Minister and party head Ajit Pawar being nominated from Baramati seat in Pune district. NCP has also fielded sitting legislators Sulbha Khodke (Amravati) and Hiraman Khoskar (Igatpuri) who recently quit Congress. Bharat Gavit, son of Congress veteran late Manikrao Gavit, has been fielded from Navapur.

Deputy Speaker of state assembly Narhari Zirwal has been fielded from Dindori and state cabinet minister Chhagan Bhujbal from Yeola. Former minister Rajkumar Badole, who was earlier with BJP, from Arjuni-Morgaon. *—PTI*

J'khand polls: JMM releases 2nd list

CM Hemant Soran to contest from Barhait

RANCHI, 23 OCT

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Wednesday released its second list of candidates for the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly polls, fielding Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji from Ranchi.

Maji, who was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha in June 2022, previously served as the chairperson of the Jharkhand State Commission for Women and was the former president of the JMM's women's wing.

She had contested the Ranchi assembly seat unsuccessfully in 2014 and 2019. NDA constituent BJP has fielded incumbent legislator CP Singh from Ranchi.

Singh had won by a margin of 5,904 votes from the seat in 2019, defeating Maji.

In 2014, Singh had defeated Maji by a margin of 58,863 votes.

Meanwhile, sources said there was resentment among INDIA bloc constituent Congress over JMM's nominee from the seat.

JMM is in alliance with Congress and the RJD **PHOTO: PTI**

Earlier in 2022, when Maji's name was announced as Rajya Sabha candidate, the Congress maintained that there was "a contradiction between what was discussed in Delhi and the decision that was taken by the JMM".

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is in alliance with Congress and the RJD in Jharkhand.

Earlier in the day, the JMM released its first list of 35 candidates and nominated Chief Minister Hemant Soren from Barhait, Kalpana Soren from Gandey and Basan Soren from Dumka.

Filing of nomination papers for 43 Assembly constituencies of Jharkhand, which are going to polls on 13 November in the first phase, began on Friday and will continue till 25 October.

Altogether 2.60 crore electors, including 11.84 lakh first-time voters and 1.13 lakh persons with disabilities (PwD), third gender and senior citizens over 85 years of age, are eligible to exercise their franchise in the upcoming elections. *—PTI*

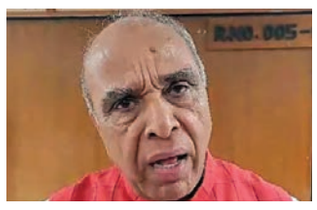
Waqf Parl panel chief's remarks violate norms: Oppn

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Opposition leaders on Wednesday hit out at the chairman of the parliamentary committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, Jagdambika Pal, accusing him of violating rules of procedure by going public on the incident of TMC member Kalyan Banerjee smashing a glass bottle and allegedly throwing it towards him.

Pal rejected the allegations levelled by DMK member A Raja and AAP member Sanjay Singh, asserting that he had not made public proceedings of the committee but spoke about an incident of violence that had taken place during the meeting.

Raja and Singh termed as "unfortunate" Pal's media statements on the incident involving Banerjee during a meeting of the committee on Tuesday.



Jagdambika Pal **PHOTO: PTI**

Pal asserted that he had not revealed any deliberations of the parliamentary committee, but made a statement about an incident of violence that took place. BJP and Opposition members have been engaged in bitter spats during the meetings of the Committee considering the contentious bill, described as a necessary reform by the government and slammed as an interference in the religious affairs of Muslims by the INDIA bloc parties. *—PTI*

BRICS SUMMIT

India supports dialogue, diplomacy, not war: PM

KAZAN, 23 OCT

India supports dialogue and diplomacy and not war, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the BRICS Summit here on Wednesday, in an unambiguous message calling for resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict through peaceful negotiations.

In his address, Modi flagged concerns over pressing challenges such as wars, economic uncertainty, climate change and terrorism and said the BRICS can play a positive role to take the world in the right path.

"We support dialogue and diplomacy, not war. And just as we were able to overcome a challenge like COVID together, we are certainly able to create new opportunities to ensure a secure, strong and prosperous future for future generations," he said.

Narendra Modi **PHOTO: PTI**

The summit was attended by top leaders of BRICS nations, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

The prime minister also batted for concerted global efforts to deal with terrorism and that there must not be any "double standards" in fighting the menace.

"We need to take active steps to stop the radicalisation of youth in our countries. We must work together on the long pending matter in the UN of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism," he said. "The same way, we need to work on global regulations for cyber security and for safe and secure AI," he added. Modi said India is ready to welcome new countries into BRICS as partner countries. *—PTI*

Gujarat man convicted for plotting with ISI agents

LUCKNOW, 23 OCT

A special court here has convicted a man from Gujarat for conspiring with Pakistan-backed ISI agents to carry out terrorist acts in the country, a statement issued by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday said.

Rajakbhai Kumbhar is the second accused to be convicted in the case which was registered by the NIA in 2020, it said.

He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment by the special NIA court on Tuesday under different provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, with a maximum sentence of six years, the statement said.

All sentences will run concurrently, it added. *—PTI*

BJP'S 40-STAR CAMPAIGNERS FOR PUNJAB BYPOLLS

The polls are in Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbewal, and Barnala on 13 November

- Haryana Chief Minister **Nayab Singh Saini**
- Ex-Punjab Chief Minister **Amarinder Singh**
- Union ministers **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and Ravneet Singh Bittu
- MPs Manoj Tiwari, Ravi Kishan and BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa
- BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, Punjab BJP Chief Sunil Jakhar, Union Minister, Arjun Ram Meghwal, and former ministers Anurag Thakur and Smriti Irani are included

SP candidate Naseem Solanki with her family members before filing nomination papers in Kanpur **PHOTO: PTI**

KERALA CM VIJAYAN TERMS KANNUR ADM'S DEATH 'UTMOST PAINFUL'

T'PURAM, 23 OCT

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday broke his silence over the recent death of Assistant District Magistrate (ADM) Naveen Babu, which has triggered a political row in the state, saying that the officer's 'untimely death" was 'utmost painful' and no official should suffer such an ill-experience in the state. He assured that the government would take adequate measures to ensure that such things would not happen in the state anymore. Vijayan mentioned the death during his speech at the annual conference of the Kerala Secretariat Employees Association. "The government will not let anyone question the self-respect of any official who delivers their responsibilities sincerely and efficiently," he said. *—PTI*

Jagan accuses Sharmila of 'illegally' transferring shares

HYDERABAD, 23 OCT

YSRCP Chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has moved the NCLT accusing his sister and AP Congress President YS Sharmila of illegally transferring shares of Saraswati Power and Industries holding by him and his wife Bharathi, on her and their mother Vijayamma's name.

The feud between Jagan and Sharmiala took a new turn in the form of the legal battle with the petition filed last month in the Hyderabad Bench of National Company Law Tribunal being taken up and posted to November for further hearing.

In the petition, Jagan said he entered into an MoU with Sharmila wherein he said that "out of love and affection" would transfer his and his wife's shares of Saraswati Power and Industries through gift deed to his estranged sister, subject to pending cases in respect of some properties including attachments by the Enforcement Directorate.

Jagan in a letter to his sister opined that the share transfer without fulfilling the legal obligations and clearance from court would potentially have adverse implications.

Jagan Mohan **PHOTO: PTI**

He, however expressed his desire to revoke the memorandum of understanding saying, "it is no secret that we are no longer on the best of terms, and in view of this changed situation, I wanted to formally intimate you and put you on notice that I have no further intent to act upon my original intent as expressed in the MoU." He intended to transfer the shares (Jagan's own property), in addition to Rs 200 crore, directly or through their mother, gave to his sister during the past decade. He alleged that atrocities against women increased after the TDP-led NDA government came to power. *—PTI*

GANDHIS AIM TO RETAIN SEAT

Priyanka kicks off poll debut with massive roadshow, files papers

WAYANAD, 23 OCT

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who kicked off her electoral debut with a massive roadshow in Kalpetta here and filed her nomination for the Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll, on Wednesday said she has 35 years of experience in the political arena beginning from the age of 17 years when she campaigned for her late father Rajiv Gandhi in 1989.

Addressing the massive gathering ahead of filing nominations for the 13 November bypoll, she said, "At the age of 17 years, I first campaigned for my father in 1989. It has been 35 years now (since then).

"I have campaigned for my mother, for my brother and for many of my (party) colleagues. This is the first time I am campaigning for myself." Her statement comes a day after BJP's Wayanad Lok Sabha bypoll candidate Navya Haridas said she was more experienced in representing people than Priyanka.

Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and other senior party leaders were present on the dais during Priyanka's speech.

Recalling her visit to Wayanad after the massive landslides which claimed over 200 lives, she said everyone she met was engaged in helping others. "Your courage deeply touched me. It would be a big honour and a great privilege to me to be a part of your community and your family. I am here to fight your battles, stand by you through thick and thin, be your voice, and I will not let you down," she said. Attacking the BJP government at the Centre, Priyanka said that the present times were one where those in power were trying to divide the people who voted them to power.Rahul said Priyanka would be the official MP from Wayanad, while he would be the unofficial MP.

The Congress leader also said that all religious texts, be it the Bible, Gita or Quran, teaches love, humility and equality. *—PTI*

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi with sister and Wayanad candidate Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a roadshow **PHOTO: PTI**

- **Total assets: Rs 12cr.**
- **Movable assets: 4.24 crore including 4,400g of gold worth 1.15 crore.**
- **Residential property in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla, which is presently worth over Rs 5.63 crore.**
- **Liabilities of 15.75 lakh.**

Bihar man dies after consuming spurious liquor

BIHAR, 23 OCT

A 26-year-old named Shyam Sahni died after allegedly consuming illicit liquor in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, days after a hooch tragedy in the dry state claimed 37 lives. The incident took place in the district's Hathauri area. The boy's family, who cremated his body on the same day, blamed the spurious liquor for his death. His parents claimed that the man complained of headache, uneasiness and loss of vision and that they immediately took him to the nearest hospital. Muzaffarpur district magistrate Subrat Kumar Sen said, "The exact cause is unknown as the family cremated the body before police could investigate." —*PTI*

PHOTO: CANVA

21-year-old IIT Delhi student hangs self to death

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

A 21-year-old IIT Delhi student allegedly committed suicide by hanging from a ceiling fan in his hostel room, police said on Wednesday. They said they have found no suicide note. Kumar Yash, an MSc second year student from Jharkhand's Deoghar, was under psychiatric treatment and had visited the IIT Hospital on Tuesday. On Tuesday around 11 pm, police received a PCR call about an IIT student's suicide in Aravali Hostel. A staff member and the student's friend broke the window to enter the room as the door was locked from inside. The student Kumar Yash was found hanging with two towels. They cut him down but he had already died, a police officer reported. *If you need emotional support, please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777.* —*PTI*

Yuvraj's NGO calls breasts 'oranges' in cancer ad

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

A breast cancer awareness campaign by Yuvraj Singh's non-profit, 'YouWeCan' Foundation, is facing criticism for using the word "oranges" to refer to breasts. One of the ad reads, "Check your oranges once a month," promoting early detection of breast cancer. The poster, seen inside a Delhi Metro coach, features a young woman holding two oranges while older women, one with a crate of oranges, sit nearby. A social media user, criticized the campaign, questioning the choice of words and imagery. "How will we raise awareness if we can't even call breasts what they are?" the user asked, tagging Yuvraj Singh and demanding the campaign's removal. The user also slammed Delhi Metro officials, calling the ad "tone-deaf" and urging its immediate removal. —*PTI*

Students clash in Jamia Millia during Diwali celebrations

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

A scuffle broke out between two groups of students during Diwali celebrations at Jamia Millia Islamia University here, following which police personnel were deployed outside the campus as a precautionary measure, officials said on Wednesday. A police officer said no complaint has been received in connection with the incident which took place on Tuesday night. According to police, the scuffle broke out after a group of students disrupted Diwali celebrations by another. The situation was brought under control and the students dispersed following the intervention of university security personnel. Purported videos of students chanting "communal" slogans inside the campus are doing the rounds on social media. —*PTI*

Toothless laws: SC raps govt on pollution

SC says CAQM Act, which deals with stubble burning penalty, is not being implemented

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Centre for making the environment protection law "toothless", and said the provision under the CAQM Act, which deals with penalty for stubble burning was not being implemented.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka, Ahsanuddin Amanulllah and Augustine George Masih said the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act of 2021 (CAQM Act) was enacted without creating required machinery for implementing the provision to curb air pollution.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, said section 15 of the CAQM Act, which deals with penalty for stubble burning, will be implemented effectively as regulations for it will be issued in 10 days.

She submitted that an adjudicating officer will be appointed and all necessary actions will be taken to enforce the law effectively.

Bhati pointed out that the CAQM issued notices to senior administrative officials of Punjab and Haryana besides officials of the state pollution control boards and sought their response as to why action should not be taken against them.

The bench asked the CAQM who is taking your notices seriously as the procedure is not provided under the law.

"Please tell your chairperson of CAQM not to bail out these officials. We know what is happening on the ground," the bench said. Bhati pointed out that over 1,000 cases of stubble burning have taken place in several districts of Punjab like Amritsar, Ferozepur, Patiala, Sangrur, Taran Taran. On 16 October, the top court had pulled up the Punjab and Haryana governments over the non-prosecution of violators found guilty of stubble burning. —*PTI*

Commuters on a New Delhi road amid smog on Wednesday PHOTO: PTI

No tree felling in Kolkata without CEC permission, says SC

Supreme Court on Wednesday directed no felling or transplantation of trees will take place for the metro rail project near the iconic Victoria Memorial in Kolkata without the permission of the Central Empowered Committee. The bench passed the order while hearing a plea challenging a 20 June verdict of Calcutta High Court. The High Court had dismissed a petition seeking a direction to stop all metro construction in the maidan area due to alleged felling of a large number of trees. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

AWARENESS IS KEY FOR SUCCESS OF LEGAL AID: SC

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Supreme Court on Wednesday said awareness is the key for success of functioning of legal aid mechanism and a robust system should be put in place to ensure that beneficial schemes promoted by legal services authority reaches all.

Passing a slew of directions on the issue of providing legal aid to prisoners, a bench headed by Justice BR Gavai said in public places such as police stations and bus stands, address and phone numbers of nearest legal aid office should be prominently displayed.

It said the National Legal Services Authority, in cooperation with states, shall ensure that the standard operating procedure on access to legal aid service to inmates in jail are operated efficiently.

The top court said adequate literature, including in local languages in the states, and appropriate promotional methods should be launched. —*PTI*

Chandrachud bows out of marital rape hearing

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, who is demitting office on 10 November, on Wednesday deferred by four weeks hearing on pleas challenging the immunity granted to husbands in cases of marital rape.

At the outset, a bench comprising the CJI and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, which commenced final hearing on 17 October on the pleas, asked lawyers about the time they would be needing individually to argue.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for a party, said he will take at least a day to complete his submissions.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, senior advocates Rakesh Dwivedi, who represents Maharashtra, and Indira Jaising, representing a woman, also said they would need a day each to argue.

The apex court, which is closing for Diwali vacation on 26 October, reopens on 4 November and the CJI will be left with five working days to hear and deliver a verdict on one of the most sensitive issues.

The CJI said if arguments cannot be completed this week, then it would be difficult for him to decide

DY Chandrachud PHOTO: PTI

before he demits office on 10 November.

The solicitor general said the Centre's stand is that marriage does not obliterate the concept of sexual consent, but at the same time criminalising marital rape would require assessment of the case from different perspectives.

Senior advocate Karuna Nundy, appearing for a petitioner, said the plea was about millions of women in the country and there was "great urgency".

She urged the CJI to continue with the hearing and deliver a judgement as he has a legacy of rendering "very important judgments".

On 17 October, the bench said it will decide the constitutional validity of penal provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) which grant immunity from prosecution to a husband for the offence of rape if he forces his wife, who is not a minor, to have sex with him. —*PTI*

East braces for Dana; 10L moved in Odisha, Kolkata airport shut

BHUBANESWAR, 23 OCT

As cyclone 'Dana' barrels toward the Odisha coast, threatening to impact nearly half the state's population, the government is racing against time to execute a massive evacuation plan aimed at relocating around 10 lakh people in 14 districts to safety.

Kolkata airport authorities have decided to suspend flight operations for 15 hours from 6 pm on Thursday in view of the possible impact of cyclone Dana, an official said.

Indian Meterological Department (IMD) on Wednesday said the cyclone is likely to make landfall between Bhitarkanika National Park and Dhamra port, around 70km away, early Friday.

It said that the landfall process will start from the night of 24 October and will continue till the morning of 25 October. The maximum speed during the landfall process is likely to be around 120 kmph, IMD DG Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

He said landfall is mostly a slow process which usually takes around 5-6 hours. "Therefore, heavy rainfall, wind and storm surge will reach the peak during the landfall time," he added.

During the landfall, a tidal surge of up to 2m is expected, with the cyclone reaching the coast at a wind velocity of 120 km/h, Umashankar Das, senior scientist at the regional meteorological centre in Bhubaneswar, said.

To facilitate this, 288 rescue teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF), and Fire Services have been deployed, with additional personnel requested from the NDRF. The government has identified 14 districts at risk, with the coastal areas facing high winds and inland regions expected to receive heavy to extremely heavy rainfall.

The districts are Angul, Puri, Nayagarh, Khordha, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, and Mayurbhanj. In addition to the evacuation, the state has set up around 6,000 relief camps where evacuees will have access to cooked meals, milk for children, medical care, safe drinking water, and security for women. —*PTI*

An Indian Coast Guard official makes announcements ahead of the landfall of Cyclone Dana PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

India Post asked to pay back user 50p plus ₹15,000

CHENNAI, 23 OCT

Not returning 50 paisa to a consumer and 'rounding it off' has cost the India Post dearly, which has been directed by a consumer disputes redressal commission to refund it. In addition to providing a compensation of Rs 10,000 to him for causing mental agony, unfair trade practice and deficiency in service.

Also, the Kancheepuram district consumer disputes redressal commission has asked the Department of Posts (DoP) to pay Rs 5,000 towards litigation cost.

According to the complainant, A Manasha, he paid Rs 30 in cash for a registered letter at Pozhichalur post office near here on 12 December, 2023, but the receipt showed only Rs 29.50. Though he offered to remit the exact amount through UPI, it was declined by postal personnel due to some technical issues.

In his plaint, he said lakhs of transactions happened daily and not accounting them properly had consequences including loss to the government and termed it illegal which caused him 'serious mental agony.'

The department submitted before the forum that due to technical issues, payment through digital mode could not be accepted, at that time, from the consumer and hence cash was collected from him. —*PTI*

2001 murder: HC ends Chota Rajan's life term

MUMBAI, 23 OCT

Bombay High Court on Wednesday suspended the life sentence of gangster Chhota Rajan in the murder of hotelier Jaya Shetty here in 2001 and granted him bail in the case.

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Prithviraj Chavan directed Rajan to furnish a bond of Rs 1 lakh for the bail.

Rajan will, however, continue to remain in jail in other criminal cases.

In May this year, a special court convicted Rajan in the hotelier's murder case and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Rajan filed an appeal in the High Court against the conviction.

He sought that the sentence be suspended and he be granted bail in the interim.

Jaya Shetty, who owned the Golden Crown hotel at Gamdevi in central Mumbai, was shot dead by two alleged members of Rajan's gang on the hotel's first floor on May 4, 2001.

Chhota Rajan PHOTO: PTI

A probe suggested that Shetty had received extortion calls from Hemant Pujari, a member of the Chhota Rajan gang, and was killed because of his failure to pay the money.

Rajan, already serving a life term for the murder of veteran crime reporter J Dey, is currently lodged at the Tihar jail in Delhi. —*PTI*

DEAF-MUTE UP WOMAN RAPED, CHILD MOLESTED

BANDA, 23 OCT

A 22-year-old deaf-mute woman was allegedly raped and her infant daughter molested inside their house by a man in neighbouring Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh, police officials said on Wednesday.

The police have lodged an FIR against the 23-year-old accused, who is absconding since the incident on Tuesday, a senior official said.

"The woman was cooking food in the house and her husband had gone out for some work when accused Raj Narayan entered the home and committed the crime," police said. "He later molested the infant daughter of the woman. When the husband returned, the woman explained to him through gestures about what happened with her. The husband then approached the police," the officer said. —*PTI*

Kerala flays Centre's Explosives Act

T'PURAM, 23 OCT

Kerala government on Wednesday expressed concern over the recent gazette notification issued by the Centre, which stipulates certain conditions for conducting fireworks.

The cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, discussed certain conditions mentioned in the amendments to the Explosives Act notified by the Centre on 11 October, which would adversely impact various religious festivals in the state, including the famed Thrissur Pooram. Kerala Devaswom Minister VN Vasavan has called the Centre's new fireworks rules as "irrational" and "unnecessary" and sent a letter demanding modifications in its recent gazette notification stipulating certain conditions for conducting fireworks. Among other stipulations, Condition No 2 requires that the licensed magazine be located at least 200m away from the display site.

At the annual temple festival of Thrissur Pooram, traditional fireworks display is the main attraction. PHOTO: PTI

In the letter sent to Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, he said fireworks are part of ritualistic practices in the state and a major attraction of religious festivals. Vasavan said it cannot be displayed if the Union government's order is implemented. Referring to the iconic Thrissur Pooram, he said that annual festival is a pride of Kerala, and the display of fireworks that lasts for hours is one of the attractions of the spectacle. However, the new rule will take the sheen off the Pooram festivities, he said.

If the order is implemented as such, the display of fireworks on Pooram Day has to be abandoned, which may invite huge protests, he pointed out. —*PTI*

WHO'S SUGGESTION IGNORED

77% minors lack diversity in diet: Study

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

About 77 per cent of children in India aged 6-23 months lack diversity in diet as suggested by the WHO, with the country's central region showing the highest prevalence of minimum dietary failure, a study has found.

The states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh reported the highest levels of inadequate diversity in children's diets— all above 80 per cent—while Sikkim and Meghalaya were the only two to report an under-50 per cent prevalence.

World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests using the Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) score to evaluate the quality of a child's diet— it is considered to be diverse if it contains five or more food groups, including breastmilk, eggs, legumes and nuts, and fruits and vegetables.

Researchers found that the country's overall rate of minimum dietary diversity failure has dropped from 87.4 per cent, which was calculated using data from 2005-06 (NFHS-3).

The consumption of eggs registered an "impressive" rise, from around 5 per cent in NFHS-3 to over 17 per cent in NFHS-5 while that of legumes and nuts increased from nearly 14 per cent during 2005-06 to over 17 per cent during 2019-21.

"The consumption of vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables increased by 7.3 per cent, whereas the consumption of fruits and vegetables increased by 13 per cent points over the same time. For flesh foods, the consumption increased by 4 percentage points," the authors wrote. However, the consumption of breastmilk and dairy products was found to drop from 87 per cent in NFHS-3 to 85 per cent in NFHS-5 and 54 per cent to 52 per cent, respectively. —*PTI*

Researchers found that the country's overall rate of minimum dietary diversity failure has dropped from 87.4 per cent PHOTO: DAILYEXCELSIOR

Gujarat cops file theft case against jailed scribe

AHMEDABAD, 23 OCT

The Gujarat police have registered a theft case against senior journalist Mahesh Langa, who is already behind bars in an alleged Goods and Services Tax scam, following the recovery of some documents of the Gujarat Maritime Board from him, an official said.

This is the second FIR registered against Langa after his arrest earlier this month by the Ahmedabad Crime Branch in the alleged GST scam.

Langa, who worked with a leading newspaper in Gujarat, was sent to judicial custody last week after his remand in the GST case came to an end.

"The second FIR was registered on Tuesday night at Sector 7 police station in Gandhinagar city," District Superintendent of Police Ravi Teja Vasamsetty said on Wednesday.

Mahesh Langa PHOTO: PTI

The online FIR is not accessible to the public as it has been put under "sensitive" category, he said.

Sources said that Langa and an unidentified employee of the Gujarat Maritime Board have been booked on the charges of theft. —*PTI*

WORLD UNDER ONE ROOF

Boulevard World, a premier entertainment zone located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The arena boasts of over 20 diverse areas from around the globe, including India, along with nearly 300 restaurants and cafes
PHOTO: PTI

US elections: Polls show tight race between Kamala & Trump

Voters in Hawaii, Missouri, Utah, and Wisconsin started casting their ballots on Tuesday, joining several other states that began early voting in recent weeks.

Polls suggest Democratic candidate Kamala Harris and Republican contender Donald Trump are neck-and-neck nationwide and in battleground states.

On Tuesday, Harris gave two interviews – one to NBC News and another with Telemundo. Meanwhile, Trump held a rally in North Carolina after hosting a roundtable discussion with Latino leaders.

Here's a look at what the polls say, the key highlights from campaigns over the previous day, and what to expect next.

According to polls, there is a close race between both candidates. A Reuters/Ipsos poll suggested that Kamala Harris had a slight lead over Donald Trump, with 46 per cent to 43 per cent
PHOTOS: PTI

What are the latest updates from the polls?

According to polls, there is a close race between both candidates. On Tuesday, a Reuters/Ipsos poll suggested that Harris had a slight lead over Trump, with 46 percent to 43 percent.

The new poll also suggested that voters share a negative outlook on the economy and immigration, generally favouring Trump's approach to these issues. About 60 percent believed the economy was moving in the wrong direction.

According to Five Thirty Eight's daily election poll tracker, as of October 22, Harris was leading in the national polls and had a 1.9 percentage-point lead over Trump.

National surveys provide valuable insights into voter sentiment, but the outcome of the Electoral College – determined by state-by-state results – ultimately decides the winner, with seven battleground states expected to be critical.

The difference between Harris and Trump in each of the seven battleground states — Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin and Nevada — is within the margin of error of polls. That means the two candidates are effectively tied across these states, with Trump marginally ahead in the poll averages for Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina and Arizona, and Harris with a wafer-thin lead in Michigan, Wisconsin and Nevada.

If these marginal differences between their polling numbers hold, Trump is likely to win the presidency.

But if polls undercounted support for Harris in even one of the battleground states Trump leads in, the outcome could be a win for the incumbent vice president.

What was Kamala Harris up to on Tuesday?

In an interview with NBC in Washington, DC, Harris said her team is prepared to challenge any early victory claim made by Trump, emphasising that her priority is defeating him.

She said the Democrats "have the resources and expertise" to counter any attempts by Trump to undermine the election.

"This is a person, Donald Trump, who tried to undo a free and fair election, who still denies the will of the people, who incited a violent mob to attack the United States Capitol and some 140 law enforcement officers were attacked, some were killed. This is a very serious matter," she added.

She was also interviewed by Telemundo, a Spanish-language television network in the US. During the interview, she said, according to a report by Associated Press news agency, that she will work to build an economy that "supports the working class". She also emphasised her focus on solutions that "could bring more capital" to the community. This interview is set to air on Wednesday.

What was Donald Trump up to?

Trump held a roundtable with Latino leaders in Florida. In his opening remarks, prominent Florida Republicans, including Miami Mayor Francis Suarez and US Senator Rick Scott, highlighted Trump's record of supporting the Hispanic community during his previous term.

According to Al Jazeera's John Holman, reporting from Miami, Harris has strong support among Latino voters, while Trump is working to secure key endorsements from the community, especially in politically vital states.

"When we look at the battleground states, according to Voto Latino, Harris has the support of 63 percent of Latino voters, while Trump has less than half of that at 31 percent," Holman said.

"What he will be trying to do is not to supersede the support that Harris has, but to prise enough Latino voters away from her, especially in states like Nevada and Arizona … to try to get a path to victory, and there are signs especially among male Latino voters that he might be able to do that," he added.

What's next for the Harris and Trump campaigns?

On Wednesday, CNN will host a live town hall with Harris outside of Philadelphia with a live audience of undecided voters. Walz is set to return to the city on Friday, marking his first visit back to Philadelphia since being announced as Harris's running mate over the summer.

Separately on Thursday, iconic musician Bruce Springsteen will appear with Harris and Obama at a rally in Atlanta, Georgia, according to sources.

Trump to campaign in battleground Georgia

Trump is expected to campaign in Georgia too. In the state – with 16 Electoral College votes – Trump is leading Harris by 1.5 percentage points, according to FiveThirtyEight's daily election poll tracker. *—Al Jazeera*

SALAR سالار

4 in 10 deaths in war zones last year were women: UN

The proportion of women killed in armed conflicts last year doubled, compared to 2022. Four of every 10 people who died as a result of conflict in 2023 were women. Meanwhile, UN-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50 per cent in 2023, according to the latest annual report by UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Women, Peace, and Security, led by UN Women.

These increases in deaths during war and in violence against women are taking place against a backdrop of increasing blatant disregard of international law designed to protect women and children during war, a United Nations statement said on 23 October.

"For example, women in war zones are also increasingly suffering from restricted access to healthcare. Every day, 500 women and girls in conflict-affected countries die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. By the end of 2023, 180 women were giving birth every day in war-torn Gaza—most without necessities or medical care," it noted.

The report comes 24 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325, which called for all parties to conflicts to ensure the safety of women and girls, and for women's full involvement in peace processes.

"Women continue to pay the price of the wars of men," said UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous.

"This is happening in the context of a larger war on women. The deliberate targeting of women's rights is not unique to conflict-affected countries but is even more lethal in those settings. We are witnessing the weaponisation of gender equality on many fronts, if we do not stand up and demand change, the consequences will be felt for decades, and peace will remain elusive" she added.

The report comes 24 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution
PHOTO: UN

Despite commitments to ensure women's full and meaningful participation in peace and security matters made over many years, political and military power and decision-making around conflicts continue to be overwhelmingly dominated by men.

Women made up only 9.6 per cent of negotiators in peace processes in 2023, even though studies show that when women are involved, peace agreements last longer and are better implemented.

For instance, women-led negotiations in Yemen resulted in safe access to a water source for civilians. Forty-nine women-led organisations in Sudan are pushing for a more inclusive peace process. These efforts are largely unsupported or unrecognized in formal peace negotiations.

"One of the key challenges in realizing women, peace and security commitments identified in the report is the severe lack of funding. In 2023, global military expenditures reached a record $2.44 trillion. In contrast, funding for organisations and movements supporting women's rights continues to fall short, averaging just 0.3 per cent of total aid annually—especially in conflict-affected areas. Investments in gender-based violence prevention and response make up less than one per cent of all humanitarian spending," the statement observed.

Only through bold political action and increased funding, will women's equal and meaningful participation in peace and security become a reality. That reality is essential for achieving lasting peace for all, the report concluded.

—Courtesy, Down to Earth

Funding for organisations and movements supporting women's rights continues to fall short, averaging just 0.3 per cent of total aid annually
PHOTO: UNICEF

LETTERS Write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

4,300T of space junk: Another satellite breakup adds to orbital debris woes

A large communications satellite has broken up in orbit, affecting users in Europe, Central Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Australia, and adding to the growing swarm of space junk clouding our planet's neighbourhood.

The Intelsat 33e satellite provided broadband communication from a point some 35,000km above the Indian Ocean, in a geostationary orbit around the equator. Initial reports on 20 October said Intelsat 33e had experienced a sudden power loss. Hours later, US Space Forces-Space confirmed the satellite appears to have broken up into at least 20 pieces.

So what happened? And is this a sign of things to come as more and more satellites head into orbit?

A space whodunnit

There are no confirmed reports about what caused the breakup of Intelsat 33e. However, it is not the first event of its kind.

In the past we've seen deliberate satellite destructions, accidental collisions, and loss of satellites due to increased solar activity.

What we do know is that Intelsat 33e has a history of issues while in orbit. Designed and manufactured by Boeing, the satellite was launched in August 2016.

In 2017, the satellite reached its desired orbit three months later than anticipated, due to a reported issue with its primary thruster, which controls its altitude and acceleration.

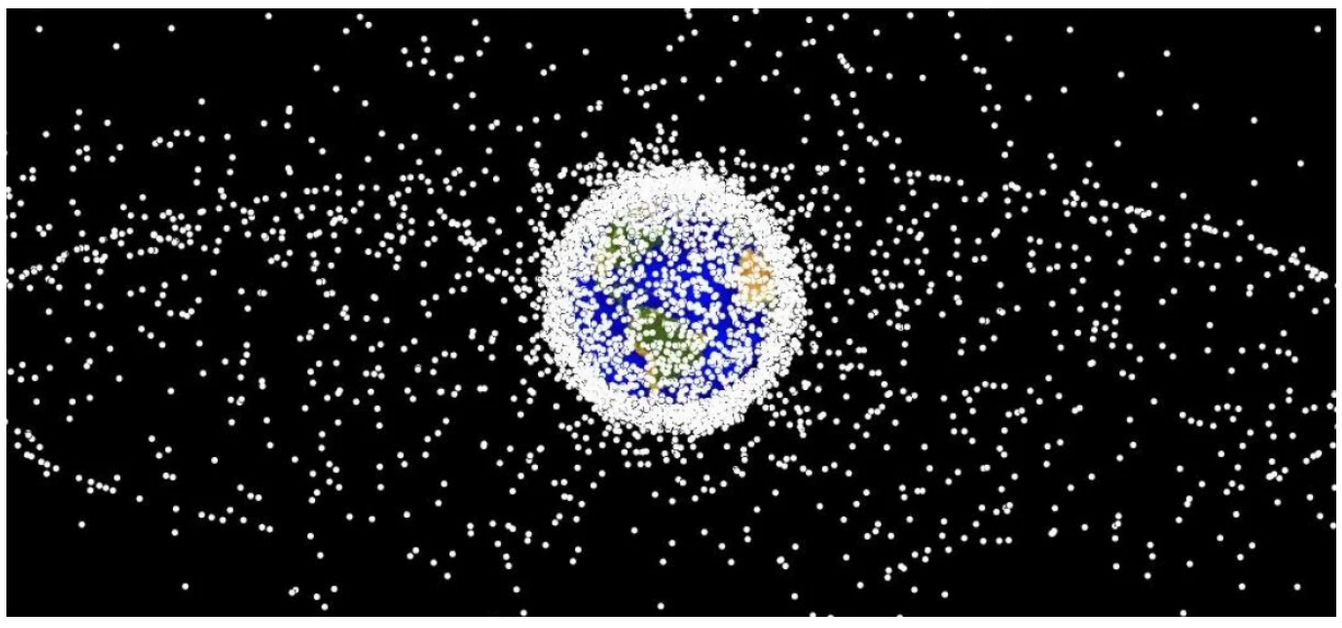
More propulsion troubles emerged when the satellite performed something called a station keeping activity, which keeps it at the right altitude. It was burning more fuel than expected, which meant its mission would end around 3.5 years early, in 2027. Intelsat lodged a US$78 million insurance claim as a result of these problems.

However, at the time of its breakup, the satellite was reportedly not insured.

30 blue whales of space junk

The amount of debris in orbit around Earth is increasing rapidly. The European Space Agency (ESA) estimates there are more than 40,000 pieces larger than 10cm in orbit, and more than 130,000,000 smaller than 1cm.

The total mass of human-made space objects in Earth orbit is some 13,000 tonnes. That's about the same mass as 90 adult male blue whales. About one third of this mass is debris (4,300 tonnes), mostly in the form of leftover rocket bodies. Tracking and identifying space debris is a challenging task. At higher altitudes, such as Intelsat 33e's orbit around 35,000km up, we can only see objects above a certain size.



US Space Forces confirmed that multiple satellites have broken up into multiple pieces
PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

One of the most concerning things about the loss of Intelsat 33e is that the breakup likely produced debris that is too small for us to see from ground level with current facilities.

The past few months have seen a string of uncontrolled breakups of decommissioned and abandoned objects in orbit.

In June, the RESURS-P1 satellite fractured in low Earth orbit (an altitude of around 470km), creating more than 100 trackable pieces of debris. This event also likely created many more pieces of debris too small to be tracked.

In July, another decommissioned satellite – the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) 5D-2 F8 spacecraft – broke up. In August, the upper stage of a Long March 6A (CZ-6A) rocket fragmented, creating at least 283 pieces of trackable debris, and potentially hundreds of thousands of untrackable fragments.

It is not yet known whether this most recent event will affect other objects in orbit.

This is where continuous monitoring of the sky becomes vital, to understand these complex space debris environments.

Who is responsible?

When space debris is created, who is responsible for cleaning it up or monitoring it?

In principle, the country that launched the object into space has the burden of responsibility where fault can be proved. This was explored in the 1972 Convention of International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects.

In practice, there is often little accountability. The first fine over space debris was issued in 2023 by the US Federal Communications Commission.

It's not clear whether a similar fine will be issued in the case of Intelsat 33e.

Looking ahead

As the human use of space accelerates, Earth orbit is growing increasingly crowded. To manage the hazards of orbital debris, we will need continuous monitoring and improved tracking technology alongside deliberate efforts to minimise the amount of debris.

Most satellites are much closer to Earth than Intelsat 33e. Often these low Earth orbit satellites can be safely brought down from orbit (or "de-orbited") at the end of their missions without creating space debris, especially with a bit of forward planning.

In September, ESA's Cluster 2 "Salsa" satellite was de-orbited with a targeted re-entry into Earth's atmosphere, burning up safely. Of course, the bigger the space object, the more debris it can produce.

NASA's Orbital Debris Program Office calculated the International Space Station would produce more than 220 million debris fragments if it broke up in orbit, for example. *—The Conversation*

Hezbollah leader's likely successor killed: Israel

Hezbollah targets central and northern Israel as IDF expands strikes in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 23 OCT

Israel said Tuesday that one of its airstrikes outside Beirut earlier in the month killed a Hezbollah official widely expected to have replaced the militant group's longtime leader, who was killed by an Israeli airstrike in September.

There was no immediate confirmation from Hezbollah about the fate of Hashem Safieddine, a powerful cleric who was expected to succeed Hassan Nasrallah, one of the group's founders.

Safieddine was killed in early October in a strike that also killed 25 other Hezbollah leaders, according to Israel, whose airstrikes in southern Lebanon in recent months have killed many of Hezbollah's top leaders, leaving the group in disarray.

Last week, Israel killed the top leader of Hamas, Yahya Sinwar, during a battle in Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office called his meeting with Blinken, which lasted more than two hours, "friendly and productive."

Hashem Safieddine **PHOTO: X**

The Beirut suburb where Safieddine was killed was pummelled by fresh airstrikes Tuesday, including one that levelled a building Israel said housed Hezbollah facilities. The collapse sent smoke and debris flying into the air a few hundred meters (yards) from where a spokesperson for Hezbollah had just briefed journalists about a weekend drone attack that damaged Netanyahu's house.

- Tuesday's airstrikes came 40 minutes after Israel issued an evacuation warning for two buildings in the area that it said were used by Hezbollah

Tuesday's airstrikes came 40 minutes after Israel issued an evacuation warning for two buildings in the area that it said were used by Hezbollah.

An Israeli airstrike late Monday in Beirut destroyed several buildings across the street from the country's largest public hospital, killing 18 people and wounding at least 60 others. The Israeli military said it struck a Hezbollah target, without elaborating, and said that it hadn't targeted the hospital itself. *—PTI*

FBI probes unauthorised release of docus

NEW YORK, 23 OCT

The FBI said that it is investigating the unauthorised release of classified documents on Israel's preparation for attack on Iran. The National Security Spokesman John Kirby said that the Biden administration is still not certain if the classified information was leaked or hacked but that officials don't have any indication at this point of "additional documents like this finding their way into the public domain." *—PTI*

IRAQ KILLS IS GROUP COMMANDER AND EIGHT OTHER OFFICIALS

BAGHDAD, 23 OCT

Iraq's Prime Minister announced Tuesday that the Islamic State militant group's leader in Iraq was killed in a military operation along with eight of the group's other senior leaders. US officials said two American service members were injured in the joint raid overnight Monday that was conducted by US and Iraqi forces. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said Jassim al-Mazroui Abu Abdul Qader was killed in an operation by counterterrorism forces and the national security service under the Joint Operations Command in the Hamrin Mountains. *—PTI*

ISRAEL ARRESTS 7 JERUSALEM RESIDENTS FOR ALLEGEDLY SPYING FOR IRAN

TEL AVIV, 23 OCT

Seven Israeli citizens were arrested last month on suspicion of spying for Iran for as long as two years, carrying out hundreds of tasks at the behest of the Islamic Republic, prosecutors said. they Reportedly, they were planning to assassinate Israeli officials "This is one of the most severe cases we've ever investigated. There is a real possibility that the main charge will be aiding the enemy in wartime, for which the penalty is death or life imprisonment," said Chief Superintendent Yaron Binyamin, who heads the Lahav 433 serious crimes unit of the Israel police. *—Times of Israel*

Attack on Turkish Aerospace leaves multiple casualties

ANKARA, 23 OCT

Turkish media reports say an explosion followed by gunfire was heard at the premises of Turkish aerospace and Defence Company. Turkey's interior minister said the attack left a number of people dead or injured. HaberTurk television reports the explosion on Wednesday may have been caused by a suicide bomber. Employees at the company, located in the outskirts of Ankara, were taken to a safe area, the report said. Private NTV television said a group assailants arrived at an entry to the complex inside a taxi during a changing of the security personnel. At least one of the assailants detonated a bomb, while other attackers managed to enter the complex. NTV said gunfire at the site was continuing and that some personnel at the complex may have been taken hostage. Earlier, media reports said an explosion followed by gunfire was heard at the complex. Security forces, ambulances and fire fighters were dispatched to the site. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PA WIRE

2 dead after migrant boat sinks in English Channel

PARIS, 23 OCT

French maritime authorities pulled the bodies of two migrants from the English Channel on Wednesday, pushing the count of dead and missing in French waters so far this year above 50. Authorities said 46 other people were rescued, after a failed attempt to cross the treacherous waterway between France and England aboard a heavily overloaded inflatable boat. *—PTI*

N Korea has sent 1,500 troops to Russia: S Korea

SEOUL, 23 OCT

South Korea's spy chief has told lawmakers that North Korea has sent additional 1,500 troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine. Last week, the National Intelligence Service said it had confirmed that North Korea sent 1,500 special operation forces to Russia this month. NIS director Cho Tae-yong told a closed-door parliamentary committee meeting Wednesday that his agency has found North Korea sent additional 1,500 soldiers to Russia, according to lawmakers Park Sunwon and Lee Seong Kweun who attended the meeting. Park cited Cho as saying that North Korea plans to send a total of 10,000 troops to Russia by December. *—PTI*

Boeing reports Q3 loss of $6.2 billion

EVERETT, 23 OCT

Boeing reported a massive loss of more than USD 6 billion in its third quarter, dragged down by a work stoppage and charges tied to its commercial aircraft and defence programmes. Boeing lost USD 9.97 per share for the period ended Sept 30, with an adjusted loss of USD 10.44 per share. Analysts polled by Zacks Investment Research were calling for a loss of USD 10.34 per share. Revenue totalled USD 17.84 billion, matching Wall Street estimates. The biggest news of the day, however, is likely to come Wednesday evening, when the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers reveals whether striking union members will return to factories after crippling production. They will vote at union halls in the Seattle area and elsewhere on a Boeing offer that includes pay raises of 35% over four years, USD 7,000 ratification bonuses, and the retention of performance bonuses that Boeing wanted to eliminate. *—PTI*

Harris ready if Trump claims premature victory

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

Vice President Kamala Harris said Tuesday that her team is prepared to challenge Donald Trump if he tries to prematurely declare victory in the 2024 election — but she's first focused on beating the Republican nominee.

Harris spoke to NBC News just two weeks before Election Day, as part of a media blitz meant to deliver her closing argument before as many persuadable voters as possible. She said she was not concerned about the role sexism could play in the election, as she stands to be the first woman elected to the White House, and again defended President Joe Biden's fitness for office.

Harris said the Democrats "have the resources and the expertise" should Trump try to subvert the election. Trump has been criminally charged with trying to overturn the 2020 election, and refuses to admit he lost to President Joe Biden. After a failed legal effort to overturn the results, a mob of Trump supporters rioted at the US Capitol attacking law enforcement in an effort to stop the certification of the race.

Kamala Harris **PHOTO: X**

Some of her supporters chant "Lock him up," something Trump often said about his former Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. Harris often replies: "The courts will take care of that. We'll take care of November." *—PTI*

Gates gives $50M to NGO backing Harris

Bill Gates, the co-founder of Microsoft Corp, has reportedly made a substantial donation to a non-profit organisation supporting Vice President Kamala Harris' presidential campaign. Gates, who has traditionally refrained from political donations, privately pledged around $50 million to Future Forward, a non-profit backing Harris' presidential bid, reported The New York Times, citing three people. *—Agencies*

Former President Barack Obama and rapper Eminem greet the crowd at a rally supporting presidential nominee Kamala Harris **PHOTO: PTI**

Trump calls Kamala 'lazy', uses racist slur

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump on Tuesday called his Democratic opponent Kamala Harris "lazy," criticising the Vice President with a word long used to demean Black people in racist terms. "Who the hell takes off when you have 14 days left," Trump said at a campaign event in Doral, Florida, aimed at courting Latino voters. "She's lazy. She's lazy as hell."

Harris was spending Tuesday in meetings in Washington, DC, and was scheduled to sit for recorded interviews with Telemundo and NBC to air Tuesday evening.

It was the first day in more than two weeks that the Democratic nominee had no public events scheduled after a run of more than 14 consecutive days of travel to political events in pivotal states, including a three-state run on Monday, starting in Pennsylvania, continuing to Michigan and ending in Wisconsin. *—PTI*

21M AMERICANS HAVE ALREADY VOTED IN POLLS

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

Two weeks before the US presidential elections, as many as 21 million Americans have already cast their vote in the middle of an intense election campaign between the two candidates: Vice President Kamala Harris from the Democratic Party and the former president Donald Trump from the Republican Party.

According to data from the Election Lab at the University of Florida, about 7.8 million votes have come in through early in-person methods while the remaining over 13.3 million votes have been cast through mail ballots.

Unlike the Indian general elections, wherein campaigning stops 36 hours before the start of the voting, both campaigning and voting go parallel to each other for about four weeks.

The US presidential elections are scheduled to be held on 5 November. Political pundits say the winner would be decided on the results of the polls in seven battleground States: Arizona, Nevada, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia. *—PTI*

Hong Kong bans WhatsApp, G Drive on govt computers

HONG KONG, 23 OCT

The Hong Kong government is barring most civil servants from using popular apps like WhatsApp, WeChat and Google Drive on their work computers due to potential security risks.

The latest IT security guidelines from the Digitial Policy Office have many civil servants complaining about added inconvenience. Government workers will still be allowed to use the services from personal devices at work, and can get exceptions to the ban with approval from a manager.

Information technology experts said companies have adopted similar policies due to increasing risks of data leaks and cybersecurity challenges.

Sun Dong, Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, said on a radio program Tuesday that the ban is needed as hacking is becoming a more serious problem. He said the governments of the United States and China have also adopted stringent measures for their internal computer systems. A civil servant surnamed Lee, who requested anonymity because she was not authorised to speak to the media, said her office often uses cloud storage services to exchange large files with vendors outside the government. *—PTI*

B'desh in soup as protesters demand removal of Prez

DHAKA, 23 OCT

Several hundred protesters on Tuesday tried to storm the presidential palace, demanding President Mohammed Shahabuddin's resignation for his recent comment on deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

In an interview with Bangla daily Manab Zamin last week, Shahabuddin said he did not have any documentary evidence of Hasina resigning as prime minister before she fled the country on August 5 amidst student-led mass protests. Witnesses and TV footage showed protestors under different banners scuffling with police as they barred the demonstrators from entering the Bangabhaban. The police eventually fired sound grenades, prompting army troops to later intervene and then send policemen inside the palace. The situation eased a little as the military using loudspeakers requested agitators to leave the Bangabhaban gate.

The Business Standard, a Bangladeshi daily, quoted hospital sources as saying that two people sustained gunshot injuries when security forces fired shots to contain protesters from breaking the barricades of the presidential palace.

It said a third person was wounded by a sound grenade used to create a sound explosion to disperse violent mobs. *—PTI*

30 Pak students hurt during protests

LAHORE, 23 OCT

At least 30 students were injured during an on-campus clash with security guards over an alleged suicide of a girl student, harassment and other issues in the Punjab University here, police said on Wednesday.

Ten security guards and a police officer too were injured in the clashes that took place on Tuesday when the university students under the banner of the Punjab University Student Federation (PUSF) raised demands such as the alleged suicide by the female student, harassment, profiling of students especially Baloch by the intelligence agencies and fee hike.

Punjab University spokesperson Khurram Shahzad told PTI on Wednesday that the protesting students made provocative speeches and hurled stones at the varsity guards when they tried to stop them leading to injuries to 10 guards, a police officer and some students in the clashes. He said an FIR has been registered against over 50 students for attacking the varsity guards.

Police fire tear gas to disperse students protesting over an alleged rape in Punjab, Pakistan, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

In a separate incident, Pakistan's Punjab government will give PKR 10,000 to 2,200 Sikh and Hindu families each in the province on the occasion of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary and Diwali. *—PTI*

Imran Khan's wife gets bail in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD, 23 OCT

A Pakistani court on Wednesday granted bail to Bushra Bibi, the wife of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, in the Toshakhana corruption case involving the alleged illegal sale of state gifts, nearly nine months after she was arrested.

Her bail plea was accepted against Rs 1 million surety bonds during the hearing conducted by Islamabad High Court judge Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb.

Bushra is Khan's third wife and a spiritual healer. *—PTI*

49 SICK

1 dead in US from E coli infections linked to McDonald's burger

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

E Coli food poisoning linked to McDonald's Quarter Pounder hamburgers has sickened at least 49 people in 10 states, including one person who died and 10 who were hospitalised, federal health officials said Tuesday.

The death was reported in an older person in Colorado, and one child has been hospitalized with severe kidney complications, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention reported. Infections were reported between 27 September and 11 October, in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming and Wisconsin.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Colorado has the most cases, 27, followed by Nebraska with nine.

Everyone interviewed in connection with the outbreak had reported eating at McDonald's before falling ill and most mentioned eating Quarter Pounder hamburgers, the CDC said. The US Agriculture Department, the Food and Drug Administration and state health officials are also investigating.

The specific ingredient tied to the outbreak has not been identified, but investigators are focused on onions and beef. McDonald's reported to the CDC that it had removed slivered onions and beef patties used for Quarter Pounders from stores in the affected states. The burgers may be temporarily unavailable in those states.

People who develop symptoms of E. coli poisoning should seek health care immediately and tell the provider what they ate. *—PTI*

Polish radio station replaces journalists with AI 'presenters'

WARSAW, 23 OCT

A Polish radio station has triggered controversy after dismissing its journalists and relaunching this week with AI-generated "presenters".

Weeks after letting its journalists go, OFF Radio Krakow relaunched this week, with what it said was "the first experiment in Poland in which journalists...are virtual characters created by AI". The station in the southern city of Krakow said its three avatars are designed to reach younger listeners by speaking about cultural, art and social issues including the concerns of LGBTQ+ people. "Is artificial intelligence more of an opportunity or a threat to media, radio and journalism? We will seek answers to this question," the station head said. *—AP*

Sikh woman found dead in open oven in Canada Walmart

OTTAWA, 23 OCT

A 19-year-old Sikh woman was found dead inside a walk-in oven of the Walmart store's bakery department in Canada's Halifax city, according to media reports.

Halifax Regional Police (HRP) said they were called to a sudden death at the Walmart at 6990 Mumford Road around 9:30 pm on Saturday.

According to police, the woman, who has not been identified, was employed at the store. Her body was found in a walk-in oven, police said. The Maritime Sikh Society confirmed to CTV News that she was a member of their community. "It's very sad for us, for her family as well, because she came for a better future and she lost her life," said Anmolpreet Singh, with the Maritime Sikh Society. She had recently moved to Canada from India. The store has remained closed since Saturday night while the investigation is ongoing. HRP Constable Martin Cromwell said police were aware of online speculation about the woman's cause of death.

PHOTO: ANI

"The investigation is complex," said Cromwell. "We understand the public is involved, and we just wanted to encourage the public to be patient with our investigation and be mindful that there are family members and coworkers involved." *—PTI*

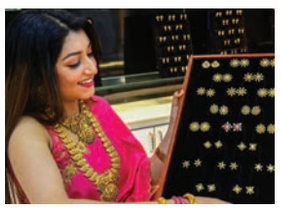


PHOTO: PTI

Gold, silver hit new highs on wedding season demand

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Rallying for the sixth straight session, gold and silver prices breached fresh record high levels in the national capital on Wednesday mainly driven by festive and wedding season demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold prices jumped by Rs 500 to an all-time high of Rs 81,500 per 10 grams while silver surged Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.02 lakh per kg. Gold prices of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity rose by Rs 500 each to Rs 81,500 per 10 grams and Rs 81,100 per 10 grams, respectively.

Silver jumped Rs 1,000 to reach a fresh high of Rs 1.02 lakh per kg from the previous close of Rs 1.01 lakh per kg on Tuesday. In the last six trading sessions, silver prices have zoomed by Rs 10,000 per kg. Gold increased by Rs 2,850 per 10 grams since 16 October.

According to Narinder Wadhwa, MD of SKI Capital, silver prices reaching Rs 1 lakh in the physical market and on the MCX is a clear reflection of multiple converging factors such as seasonal demand in India and geopolitical risks from West Asia conflict. In July, gold and silver prices corrected sharply by 7 per cent in the local markets after the government slashed basic customs duty on gold and other metals. However, the bullion prices rebounded as demand from Indian consumers increased due to ongoing festivals, expectations of rate cuts in the US and flare up in geopolitical tensions. In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery increased Rs 112 or 0.14 per cent to Rs 78,768 per 10 grams. *—PTI*

Rupee settles flat at 84.08 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 23 OCT

The rupee settled flat at 84.08 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, facing pressure from a stronger American currency as well as relentless outflow of foreign funds. Forex traders said the lacklustre sentiment in domestic equity markets and volatile geopolitics ahead of the US Presidential election kept investors on the sidelines. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic unit opened at 84.07 against the greenback and traded in a narrow range throughout the session. The unit finally settled at the previous session's closing level of 84.08 (provisional) against the dollar. On Tuesday, the rupee had settled 1 paisa lower at 84.08 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

Zomato, Swiggy raise platform fees to ₹10

NEW DELHI 23 OCT

Online food delivery firm Zomato has raised its platform fee from Rs 7 to Rs 10, from 23 October, ahead of the festive season on Wednesday. Later, its rival Swiggy also matched this increase. The platform fee, introduced in April 2023, has grown significantly from Rs 2 to Rs 10. With Zomato handling over 2 million orders daily, this change can enhance the company's profits. The company reported collecting Rs 83 crore in platform fees by March this year. A Zomato notification said, "This fee helps us pay our bills to keep Zomato running. To maintain services during the festive season, it has increased slightly." In the second quarter, Zomato's profits were lower than expected due to investments in "dark stores" for its quick commerce platform, Blinkit. According to sources, competition is intensifying in India's food delivery market, with companies seeking funds to expand. To keep up, Zomato added 152 dark stores, increasing its total to 791. *—Agencies*

SC sets aside order on Byju's ₹158cr settlement with BCCI

SC says there were procedural lapses in the settlement process

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal's (NCLAT) verdict that had stopped insolvency proceedings against embattled ed-tech firm Byju's.

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, and Justices B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra also reversed the order of the NCLAT approving Byju's Rs 158.9 crore dues settlement with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and directed the cricket board to deposit the settlement amount of Rs 158.9 crore with a committee of creditors.

The bench held that the US firm Glas Trust Company LLC, being the creditor, has the locus to intervene in matters related to the corporate insolvency proceedings at NCLT, NCLAT and in the apex court as an affected party.

The top court rapped the insolvency appellate tribunal, NCLAT, for flouting established rules in stopping the insolvency proceedings against the ed-tech firm by taking recourse to its inherent powers.

The top court rapped the insolvency appellate tribunal, NCLAT, for flouting established rules

PHOTOS: PTI/X

It said the exercise of discretionary powers by the NCLAT was not warranted in the present circumstances.

The amount of Rs 158 crore, along with the accrued interest, if any, which has been maintained in a separate escrow account pursuant to the order of 14 August is directed to be deposited by the BCCI with the committee of creditors (CoC), it ordered.

It further directed the CoC to maintain the amount in a separate account until further development, and to abide by the further directions of the national company law tribunal.

The verdict decided three issues. Firstly, whether the appellant (US firm), who was not a party to the settlement between the second respondent (BCCI) and the corporate debtor (Byju's), had locus in the proceedings before the top court. Secondly, whether the NCLAT was right in exercising its special power in allowing withdrawal of CIRP and settlement of claims between parties.

- The top court directed the CoC to maintain the amount in a separate account until further development, and to abide by the further directions of the national company law tribunal

And the third issue stated, "Without prejudice to the above, whether the NCLAT adequately addressed the objections raised by the appellant (US firm) while exercising its discretionary power…."

It said now there was a detailed procedure to deal with the withdrawal or settlement at both the stages post admission, before and after the COC was constituted. *—PTI*

Sensex drops 138 pts in straight 3rd day

MUMBAI, 23 OCT

Stock markets declined for the third straight day on Wednesday due to profit-taking in auto, pharma and capital goods shares amid relentless foreign fund outflows.

In a volatile session, benchmark BSE Sensex declined 138.74 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 80,081.98 with 22 of its constituents ending lower. Intra-day, the benchmark fell below the 80,000-mark to hit a low of 79,891.68.

The NSE Nifty closed lower by 36.60 points or 0.15 per cent to 24,435.50.

From the 30 Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, NTPC, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank and Titan were among the biggest laggards. Bajaj Finance climbed nearly 5 per cent after the firm reported a 13 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 4,014 crore in the second quarter ended September 2024. Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank and Bajaj Finserv were among other big gainers. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 3,978.61 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 5,869.06 crore.

PHOTO: PTI

"Investor mindset turned gloomy with the tepid earnings and a knee jerk reaction from FIIs, which dragged the market sentiment. However, mid and smallcaps are experiencing bargain hunting following the recent decline, though the sustainability of this momentum-driven buying remains uncertain. *—PTI*

AMID FAVOURABLE HARVEST

India remains largest growing economy: IMF

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

India remains the largest growing economy in the world, a senior official from the International Monetary Fund said, observing that the country's macroeconomic fundamentals are good.

"India is said to remain the largest growing economy in the world. We project growth at seven per cent in FY24-25, supported by recovery in rural consumption, as there have been favourable harvests. Inflation is expected to decline to 4.4 per cent in FY24-25, despite some volatility as food prices normalize," Krishna Srinivasan, Director for the IMF Asia Pacific Department, told PTI in an interview on Tuesday.

In terms of other fundamentals, he said, "despite elections, the fiscal consolidation remains on track. Reserve position is pretty good. Macro fundamentals, generally speaking, for India are good".

He suggested that the country's reform priorities post-elections need to be in three areas.

Sharing some examples of red tape in India, he said, some investors feel that entering the Indian market, setting up an investment some way, getting a tract of land for big investments can be a problem. Some also mentioned that if you want to shut down and you want to exit, that could also be a problem.

Srinivasan also flagged the recent move of workers in the county "towards the low productivity agriculture sector", saying the trend has emerged because "the kind of jobs which are being generated are not the best of jobs". *—PTI*

Govt exempts parboiled rice from export duty

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

The government has exempted parboiled rice and husked (brown) rice from export duty.

Export duty has been reduced from 10 per cent to 'nil' on parboiled rice, husked (brown) rice and rice in the husk (paddy or rough), said a late-night notification issued by the finance ministry on Tuesday.

The duty cuts are effective from 22 October.

Sources said Election Commission's clearance has been obtained on this duty cut, subject to the condition that no political mileage is derived out of the same.

Jharkhand and Maharashtra are going to polls next month.

Last month, the government had exempted non-basmati white rice from export duty.

- Husked (brown) rice is also exempted. According to sources EC's clearance has been obtained on this duty cut, subject to the condition that no political mileage is derived out of the same

It had also reduced the levy on parboiled rice, husked (brown rice), and rice in the husk (paddy or rough) to 10 per cent, from 20 per cent earlier.

Separately, the minimum export price for basmati rice was scrapped to boost outbound shipments and enhance farmers' income. *—PTI*

Centre expands 'Bharat' brand to include chana whole, masur dal

New Delhi, 23 Oct

The Centre on Wednesday expanded its subsidised pulses programme, adding chana whole and masur dal under the 'Bharat' brand in a bid to check rising prices. Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Prahlad Joshi, who launched Phase II of the initiative, said chana whole will be retailed at Rs 58 per kg and masur dal at Rs 89 per kg through cooperative networks NCCF, NAFED, and Kendriya Bhandar. *—PTI*

Wells Fargo named in cyberattack on Infosys' arm

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

American bank Wells Fargo was named by McCamish Systems, a US subsidiary of the Indian IT major Infosys, in last year's cyberattack that impacted 60 lakh individuals.

McCamish Systems said that that in addition to Wells Fargo, two US-based companies—Continental Casualty Company and KN&A, Inc (doing business as The Nolan Financial Group)—were also impacted by the cyberattack.

In November 2023, it was revealed that a ransomware attack took place on 29 October, 2023 and was discovered by the company the next day. Infosys McCamish Systems is a subsidiary of Infosys BPM Limited which, in turn, is a wholly owned wing of Infosys.

"Data protection and cybersecurity are of utmost importance to us," Infosys said in a regulatory filing on 3 November, 2023. In February this year, Bank of America named Infosys McCamish Systems as the source of the data breach that affected 57,028 of its customers.

In addition to Wells Fargo, Continental Casualty Company, and KN&A, McCamish has revealed that the cyberattack impacted many other clients. These include New York Life Group Benefit Solutions, T Rowe Price Retirement Plan Services, Principal Life Insurance Company, Prudential Insurance Company of America, and Oceanview Life and Annuity Company.

Meanwhile, according to sources, from 6 March through 25 July, however six complaints were filed in the US District Court for the Northern District of Georgia against McCamish arising out of the cybersecurity incident. *—Agencies*

UP BY 6.5%

PHOTO: X

Paytm shares up on NPCI's nod to onboard UPI users

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Shares of One97 Communications, the parent of Paytm, on Wednesday surged 6.50 per cent after the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) granted approval to Paytm to onboard new UPI users, subject to the adherence to all procedural guidelines and circulars.

The stock jumped 6.34 per cent to Rs 730.90 on the BSE.

At the NSE, it soared 6.51 per cent to Rs 731.15.

The NPCI nod is expected to come as a relief to Paytm, which had suffered a blow following the Reserve Bank of India's restrictions earlier this year on associate company Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) in onboarding new UPI users on the Paytm app.

In March, the NPCI gave approval to Paytm to participate in UPI as a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP). The NPCI allowed the company to continue UPI transactions through four banks -- SBI, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and YES Bank.

In a late evening filing on Tuesday, Paytm informed the BSE that it has received approval from the NPCI to onboard new UPI users.

"...we would like to inform you that vide letter dated October 22, 2024, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has granted approval to the company to onboard new UPI users, with adherence to all NPCI procedural guidelines and circulars," the Paytm filing, which also attached the NPCI letter granting the nod, said.

According to the letter, the approval is subject to adherence to all NPCI procedural guidelines and circulars issued from time to time, including guidelines and circulars issued specifically on risk management, brand guidelines for app and QR, multi-bank guidelines, TPAP market share and customer data.

The company will also need to adhere to the requirements outlined in the tri-partite agreement with NPCI and PSP Banks. *—PTI*

Tupperware to sell its business for $23.5M in cash

The company filed for bankruptcy protection last month, burdened with USD818 million in debt

PHOTO: TUPPERWARE

WASHINGTON, 23 OCT

Tupperware Brands has reached an agreement to sell its business to a group of lenders for USD23.5 million in cash and over USD63 million in debt relief, cancelling plans for an open-market auction of its assets.

The deal was announced at a bankruptcy court hearing in Wilmington, Delaware, on Tuesday. US Bankruptcy Judge Brendan Shannon stated that he would expedite a separate court hearing to approve the sale, which he noted was likely the best option given Tupperware's financial difficulties, Reuters reported.

The company filed for bankruptcy protection last month, burdened with USD818 million in debt and aiming to find a buyer within 30 days. Some of its lenders, however, opposed the proposed sale, arguing for control of Tupperware's assets themselves. Under the new agreement, lenders will acquire Tupperware's brand name and operations in key markets, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, China, Korea, India, and Malaysia. Tupperware plans to exit other markets with significant liabilities.

CEO Laurie Ann Goldman said Tupperware would prioritise core global markets and wind down operations elsewhere. The company's restructuring strategy includes focusing on independent sales consultants and retail partners. The deal allows lenders to use debt cancellation as part of the purchase price while also providing cash that Tupperware can use to settle other debts. *—Courtesy, CNBC*

EY REPORT

Showbiz sector lost ₹22K cr to piracy in 2023

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

The Indian entertainment industry suffered a staggering loss of Rs 22,400 crore in 2023 due to piracy, according to a report released on Wednesday, that advocated for stronger regulations and collaborative efforts to effectively mitigate piracy risks.

According to "The Rob Report" by EY and the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), 51 per cent of media consumers in India access content from pirated sources, with streaming services being the most significant contributor at 63 per cent.

"The size of India's piracy economy was Rs 22,400 crore in 2023, ranking fourth against the segment-wise revenue generated by India's Media and Entertainment industry.

"Of this, Rs 13,700 crore was generated from pirated content from movie theatres while Rs 8,700 crore was generated from OTT platforms' content. The potential GST losses of up to Rs 4,300 crore were estimated to have been incurred," it said.

Viewers cited high OTT subscription fees as a reason for piracy

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rohit Jain, Chairman of IAMAI's Digital Entertainment Committee, emphasised the urgent need for collective action among stakeholders.

"The rapid growth of digital entertainment in India is undeniable, with filmed entertainment expected to reach Rs 14,600 crore by 2026. However, this potential is severely threatened by rampant piracy. It is imperative for all stakeholders --government bodies, industry players, and consumers--to unite in combating this issue," he said.

Viewers cited high subscription fees, the unavailability of desired content, and the hassle of managing multiple subscriptions as primary reasons for indulging in pirated content.

Interestingly, 64 per cent of those who access pirated content expressed willingness to switch to authorised channels if offered for free, despite advertisement interruptions, revealing the need for content providers to rethink their pricing models and accessibility strategies.

Around 70 per cent of pirated content consumers claimed that they did not wish to purchase any OTT subscriptions, the report said. *—PTI*

Shreyas Iyer to miss Mumbai's Ranji Trophy clash

MUMBAI, 23 OCT

Shreyas Iyer will miss Mumbai's third round clash in the Ranji Trophy against Tripura, to be played at Agartala's Maharaja Bir Bikram College Stadium from 26-29 October, due to personal reasons. The right-handed batter has requested the Mumbai senior men's selection committee for some time off and his appeal has been accepted, a senior official from the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) confirmed to PTI on Wednesday. The 29-year-old has featured in each of the three domestic games for Mumbai this season, which includes the heavyweights' title win in the Irani Cup after 27 years. Iyer made 57 and 8 in the clash against the Rest of India side. Iyer scored a match-winning 142 last week in the second round Ranji Trophy Group A match against Maharashtra to help Mumbai record their first victory, post which the batter claimed that he was making steady progress in terms of his fitness. —*PTI*

Bad decision to exclude badminton from CWG: Chirag

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Former world No.1 doubles shuttler Chirag Shetty termed the exclusion of badminton from the 2026 Commonwealth Games curriculum a wrong decision, and questioned how the organisers could do away with the most popular sport in the event. The 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games on Tuesday unveiled a heavily scaled-down roster, excluding hockey, shooting, cricket, badminton and wrestling from the curriculum, a move which will severely hurt India's medal prospects at the quadrennial event. He said the popularity of the sport in CWG could be gauged from the fact that virtually all badminton competitions are played in front of a packed house. "I hope they (CWG organisers) will look into it and probably change it. As a part of the badminton community, we are disappointed. We were definitely looking forward to defend our title." —*PTI*

India off to good start in World Bridge Games

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

The Indian teams were off to a good start at the 16th World Bridge Games, also known as the Bridge Olympiad, which got underway in Buenos Aires, Argentina. At the end of day one, the Indian team was placed 12th in the open category. The Indian women were placed 15th out of 24 teams and the mixed team was fifth out of 29 sides. India seniors were leading the pack of 24 teams. It's a all-play-all-round-robin format at this elimination stage. Each member nation can send one team in each of the four categories - open, women, mixed and seniors.—*PTI*

Neeraj wants Mondotrack at NIS Patiala

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

In a meeting to discuss the draft National Sports Governance Bill on Wednesday, ace Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra had an additional plea for the government— to fast-track the process of laying down the currently in-vogue 'Mondotrack' at the National Institute of Sports in Patiala. Mondotrack is a new surface being used for track events and it is believed to enhance performance and reduce the chance of injury. The track events at the Paris Olympics and the Diamond League finale in Brussels were held on this track, which has been hailed several top international stars. The track, which is made of vulcanised rubber, absorbs shock and reduces fatigue with its elasticity and uniform dynamic response, helping athletes maintain their posture, stride-length and rhythm. —*PTI*

Pant goes past Kohli in Test ranking

Rishab reaches sixth spot while Kohli drops to eighth; Jaiswal remains at fourth

DUBAI, 23 OCT

Rishabh Pant on Wednesday overtook his superstar India teammate Virat Kohli to reach the sixth spot in the ICC Test rankings for batters.

Fresh from a counter-attacking 99 in the second innings of the opening Test against New Zealand, Pant gained three spots in the rankings while Kohli, who made a fluent 70 in Bengaluru, dropped a place to be eighth.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal remains India's highest ranked batter at four.

India captain Rohit Sharma dropped two places to be joint 15th alongside Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne.

England star Joe Root maintains a healthy lead at the top of the charts.

New Zealand duo of Rachin Ravindra (up 36 places to 18th) and Devon Conway (up 12 spots to 36th) also made good ground on the latest list for Test batters, while teammate Matt Henry (up two rungs to ninth with a new career-high rating) was the big winner in bowlers' category. Henry picked up eight wickets during the Black Caps' drought-breaking eight-wicket victory over India in Bengaluru, while teammate Will O'Rourke (up two spots to 39th) was also rewarded for his seven scalps from the same match. Pakistan spinner Noman Ali was re-instated at 17th on the rankings following his 11 wickets across two innings against England, while teammate Sajid Khan gained 22 places to move to 50th after he was adjudged Player of the Match in the same contest. —*PTI*

> **Rishabh Pant has no injury concerns and is set to keep wickets for India There are no other fitness concerns. Also, the team will decide on Jasprit Bumrah's workload after the second Test against New Zealand**
>
> - Gautam Gambhir, India head coach

Social media does not matter: Coach backs KL Rahul

PUNE, 23 OCT

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Wednesday threw his weight behind under-fire batter KL Rahul, saying it's the team management's opinion that matters and not the criticism that he is facing on social media.

Rahul was dismissed for a duck in the first innings of the opening Test against New Zealand in Bengaluru and made 12 in the second essay as the hosts lost the game by eight wickets.

But it appears Gambhir is ready to give him a long rope.

"Social media does not matter one bit. What the team management and leadership group thinks is very important. He is batting really well, had a decent knock in Kanpur (against Bangladesh on a difficult wicket," Gambhir told reporters. Rahul had managed a 68-run knock in the first innings of the Kanpur Test against Bangladesh. "I am sure he would be knowing that he has to score big runs and he has capability of scoring runs. That's why he has been backed by the team," he said. —*PTI*

Indian team during a training session ahead of the second Test cricket match between India and New Zealand in Pune on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

India eye right selection to counter NZ's spunk

PUNE, 23 OCT

Jolted by an unexpected loss on home turf, star-heavy India will look for right balance in the line-up to counter-attack against a spunky New Zealand in the crucial second Test beginning here on Thursday.

After being shot out for an embarrassing 46 in the first innings at Bengaluru, India's resolute show in the second innings could not prevent an eight-wicket pounding which saw the top-ranked team in the World Test Championship table dropping points even though it continues to hold the top spot.

Winning the next two Tests will be first priority for Rohit Sharma and his men before they hit the Australian shores for a five-Test affair next month.

With India in a spot of bother, focus has undeniably been on the nature of the pitch here at the MCA Stadium here. It does not have grass cover and is composed of black soil to negate the bounce, which New Zealand extracted in Bengaluru. India's free-flowing batters cut a sorry figure when William O'Rourke and the seasoned duo of Matt Henry and Tim Southee served a wakeup call, which no one saw coming on a pace-friendly track that was admittedly misread by Rohit. —*PTI*

Mehidy's 87 saves B'desh from loss in 1st Test vs SA

MIRPUR, 23 OCT

Mehidy Hasan's 87 not out helped Bangladesh take an 81-run lead on Wednesday, ending fears of an innings defeat in the opening Test against South Africa.

The battling Mehidy led his side to 283-7 at stumps, a comeback from 112-6 during a third day interrupted by rain and bad light. Nayeem Hasan was also unbeaten on 16.

Mehidy shared a record 138-run stand with debutant Jaker Ali, who made 58 as the hosts wiped out a first-innings deficit of 202.

Bangladesh was bowled out for 106 in its first innings before South Africa replied with 308, thanks to Kyle Verreynne's 114.

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada (4-35) and left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj (3-105) then shared seven wickets as South Africa put Bangladesh under even more pressure.

Rabada used the early moisture of the pitch expertly after Bangladesh began the day on 101-3. He pegged back the hosts with two wickets in three balls in the fourth over. Opener Mahmudul Hasan edged to the first slip on 40 after being undone by extra bounce. Mushfiqur Rahim, who became the first Bangladesh batter to reach 6,000 Test runs on Day 2, paid the price for a lack of foot movement as Rabada's fuller-length delivery skidded through to rattle the stumps when he was on 33. —*PTI*

Chad Bowes smashed the fastest double hundred *PHOTO: X*

NZ's Bowes smashes fastest double ton in List A cricket

WELLINGTON, 23 OCT

New Zealand's big-hitting opener Chad Bowes smashed the fastest double hundred in List A cricket on Wednesday, reaching the mark in just 103 balls to shatter the record held by India's Narayan Jagadeesan and Australian Travis Head.

The South African-born New Zealand batter achieved the feat while playing for Canterbury against Otago in the Ford Trophy, thus breaking the record for the fastest double century in the 50-over format.

Eventually, Bowes was dismissed for 205 off 110 deliveries. Jagadeesan and Head had reached their respective double hundreds in 114 balls.

Head achieved the feat for South Australia against Queensland in the 2021-22 Marsh Cup, while Tamil Nadu's Jagadeesan did it during his record-breaking 277 against Arunachal Pradesh in the 2022 Vijay Hazare Trophy. —*PTI*

LAPORTE'S LATE GOAL GIVES AL-NASSR 1-0 WIN

DUBAI, 23 OCT

A late Aymeric Laporte header gave Al-Nassr a 1-0 win over Iranian club Esteghlal in the group stage of the Asian Champions League Elite on Tuesday to maintain Saudi Arabia's impressive start in the competition.

After three games in the group stage, the country's three representatives are all unbeaten. Al-Hilal and Al-Ahli are first and second as the only two teams with nine points while Al-Nassr move into fourth, just two points behind.

The game was moved from Tehran to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates due to the security situation in Iran. Chances were at a premium until the final stages. Cristiano Ronaldo, who had two shots saved and one that had gone wide, sent a powerful header toward the top corner and while it was saved, former Manchester City defender Laporte headed home the rebound. —*PTI*

Beaten India face Kiwis to begin preparation for ODI World Cup

AHMEDABAD, 23 OCT

It will be a trial by fire for Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur as India begin preparations for next year's World Cup with the three-match ODI series against New Zealand starting here on Thursday, having recently endured another failure at claiming an ICC title.

The series will be vital for Kaur who has faced flak for her captaincy during the recently-held T20 World Cup in the UAE, where India failed to clear the group stage even though the skipper emerged as the team's highest scorer in the tournament.

While India look to get their act right after the forgettable outing in the UAE, New Zealand will be on a high having lifted the T20 World Cup trophy with a clinical performance throughout the tournament, barring their group game against Australia.

Kaur, 35, retained her place as captain despite questions about her leadership in recent times, and in the series against New Zealand, she will have to manage without the services of big-hitting wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh, who is due to appear in her 12th standard board exams.

The skipper was criticised for her actions in the final over of the group match against Australia in UAE, with experts and fans questioning her decision to take a single on the first delivery of the last over, leaving it to Shreyanka Patil to hit two consecutive sixes.

Experienced all-rounder Asha Sobhana will also miss out as she nurses an injury and was unavailable for selection, while seamer Pooja Vastrakar, who injured herself during the tournament in UAE, has been rested for this series.

The squad comprises a few uncapped players as there were maiden call-ups for Tejal Hasabnis, Saima Thakor and Priya Mishra. —*PTI*

The squad comprises a few uncapped players *PHOTO: PTI*

IN FIRST TEST

Hockey India lose 0-2 to Germany

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Olympic Bronze-medallists India wasted chances galore to lose 0-2 to world champions Germany in the first hockey Test of the two-match series here on Wednesday.

Germany, who are reigning Olympic Silver-medallists, fielded a young team for the series. It lived up to the expectations, at least in the first match, with Henrik Mertgens (4th minute) and skipper Lukas Windfeder (30th minute) scoring the winning goals.

There was great excitement surrounding the series as international hockey was returning to the national capital for the first time after 2014.

The Major Dhyan Chand Stadium witnessed a good turnout but the fans had to return disappointed as home team's ever-reliable skipper and star drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh endured a rare off day.

The second Test of the series will be played on Thursday.

The Indians were slow off the blocks as Germany dominated the exchanges in the first quarter. The two teams were clashing for the first time after Germany beat India in the Paris Olympics semifinal.

It took only four minutes for the visitors to take the lead, courtesy some poor defending from the Indians. Mertgens was quick to spot the opportunity and slammed home the ball for the early edge.

Germany secured the first penalty corner of the match four minutes later but India went for a video referral which was upheld.

The Indians made some circle penetrations but didn't really threaten the German defence. —*PTI*

India's Rajinder Singh (78) and Germany's Lukas Windfeder (4) vie for the ball at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

New Sports Board: Athletes demand more representation

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

Greater representation for athletes, better coordination between government and private stakeholders and the mandate for a proposed Sports Regulatory Board were some key issues raised by country's elite athletes during a consultation with Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on the draft National Sports Governance Bill here on Wednesday.

The establishment of the Sports Regulatory Board is one of the key features of the draft bill, and the body will have the authority to grant, renew and suspend affiliation of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and National Sports Federations among others.

It's over-riding powers have already been questioned by IOA President P T Usha, who has warned that its constitution might be construed as government interference by the International Olympic Committee, leading to India's suspension.

As per the draft bill, the national Olympic committee, national sports federations, the national paralympic committee and their affiliates will be annually required to make public disclosure as prescribed by the Sports Regulatory Board.

A source present in Wednesday's meeting with Mandaviya said while several sportspersons and coaches welcomed the move, they demanded more representation in the regulatory body. The draft bill has provision for just one Khel Ratna and one Dronacharya awardee in the five-member regulatory body, while secretary (sports) will be its chairman and director-general of Sports Authority of India will be its ex-officio member. —*PTI*

INDIA FALL 1-3 TO B'DESH, FINISH 2ND IN GROUP

NEW DELHI, 23 OCT

India struggled to cope with Bangladesh's midfield dominance and failed to convert their key chances to suffer a 1-3 defeat to Bangladesh in 44their final Group A fixture of the SAFF Women's Championship 2024 here on Wednesday.

Despite already securing a semi-final spot, India finished second with three points, while Bangladesh topped Group A with four points.

Afeida Khandaker (18') and Tohura Khatun (29', 42') struck for Bangladesh before skipper Bala Devi reduced the margin with a deft header two minutes later.

India also further suffered by an injury blow to midfielder Anju Tamang as her exit in the 27th minute weakened their attack. —*PTI*

HOOPS HERITAGE

LeBron & son Bronny make NBA history

LOS ANGELES, 23 OCT

LeBron James and Bronny James became the first father and son to play in the NBA together Tuesday night during the Los Angeles Lakers ' season opener.

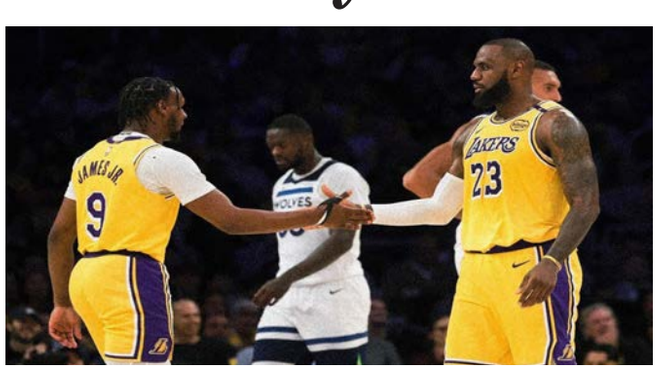
LeBron and Bronny checked into the game together with four minutes left in the second quarter, prompting a big ovation from a home crowd aware of the enormity of the milestone. The 39-year-old LeBron had already started the game and played 13 minutes before he teamed up with his 20-year-old son to make history.

LeBron James is the top scorer in NBA history, while LeBron James Jr. was a second-round pick by the Lakers last summer. They are the first father and son to play in the world's top basketball league at the same time, let alone on the same team.

LeBron and Bronny played 2 1/2 minutes on court together, and LeBron missed two perimeter shots before making a dunk. Bronny had an early rebound and missed a tip-in.

Bronny's first NBA jump shot was a 3-pointer that came up just short. He checked out with 1:19 left in the second quarter, getting another ovation.

Bronny didn't play again in the Lakers' 110-103 victory over Minnesota. LeBron, who scored 16 points, did an on-court interview with Bronny before they headed to the Lakers' locker room together — but not before stopping in the tunnel to hug Savannah James, LeBron's wife and Bronny's mother. —*PTI*



LeBron and Bronny James defend against the Minnesota Timberwolves at Crypto.com Arena on Tuesday *PHOTO: X*

Vinicius' hat-trick saves Madrid in C'ships League

MADRID, 23 OCT

"Our crown, our trophy," read the banner, held up by fans behind the Santiago Bernabeu's south goal before kickoff.

Real Madrid are the reigning European champions, the 15-time UEFA Champions League winners, and, of course, the comeback kings, as they showed once again in this unpredictable, wildly entertaining 5-2 win over Borussia Dortmund.

This is a strange Madrid team, full of elite players, but often malfunctioning as a unit. They flirted with embarrassment against Dortmund before they decided to play the hits, and turn the game around, roared on by the Bernabeu crowd.

In the first half, they were poor: fragile in defence, non-existent in midfield and hesitant in attack. In the second half, they looked like an unstoppable force of nature, led by the irrepressible Vinícius Júnior. The Brazilian scored a hat trick, in what's a contender for his career-best performance to date. —*ESPN*

Vinícius Júnior *PHOTO: X*